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Number

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Knickerbocker

SELECTIONS

FROM SEVERAL BOOKS

OF

THE VAIDANTA

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL
SANSKRITA.

BY

RAJAH RAMMOHUN ROY.

CALCUTTA:

PRINTED FOR THE TUTTUBODHENEY SOBHA

AT THE TUTTUBODHENEY PRESS.

1844.

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INTRODUCTION.

The physical powers of man are limited, and when viewed comparatively, sink into insignificance ; while in the same ratio, his moral faculties rise in our estimation, as embracing a wide sphere of action, and possessing a capability of almost boundless improvement. If the short duration of human life be contrasted with the great age of the universe, and the limited extent of bodily strength with the many objects to which there is a necessity of applying it, we must necessarily be disposed to entertain but a very humble opinion of our own nature : and nothing perhaps is so well calculated to restore our self-complacency as the contemplation of our more extensive moral powers, together with the highly beneficial objects which the appropriate exercise of them may produce.

On the other hand, sorrow and remorse can scarcely fail, sooner or later, to be the portion of him who is conscious of having neglected opportunities of rendering benefit to his fellow-creatures. From considerations like these it has been that I (although born a Brahmun, and instructed in my youth in all the principles of that sect), being thoroughly convinced of the lamentable errors of my countrymen, have been stimulated to employ every means in my power to improve their minds, and lead them to the knowledge of a purer system of morality. Living constantly amongst Hindoos of different sects and professions, I have had ample

opportunity of observing the superstitious puerilities into which they have been thrown by their self-interested guides, who, in defiance of the law as well as of common sense, have succeeded but too well in conducting them to the temple of idolatry ; and while they hid from their view the true substance of morality, have infused into their simple hearts a weak attachment for its mere shadow.

For the chief part of the theory and practice of Hindooism, I am sorry to say, is made to consist in the adoption of a peculiar mode of diet ; the least aberration from which (even though the conduct of the offender may in other respects be pure and blameless) is not only visited with the severest censure, but actually punished by exclusion from the society of his family and friends. In a word, he is doomed to undergo what is commonly called loss of cast.

On the contrary, the rigid observance of this grand article of Hindoo faith is considered in so high a light as to compensate for every moral defect. Even the most atrocious crimes weigh little or nothing in the balance against the supposed guilt of its violation.

Murder, theft, or perjury, though brought home to the party by a judicial sentence, so far from inducing loss of cast, is visited in their society with no peculiar mark of infamy or disgrace.

A trifling present to the Brahmun, commonly called prayaschitta, with the performance of a few idle ceremonies, are held as a sufficient atonement for all those crimes ; and the delinquent is at once freed from all temporal inconvenience, as well as all dread of future retribution.

My reflections upon these solemn truths have been most painful for many years. I have never ceased to contemplate with the strongest feelings of regret, the obstinate adherence of my countrymen to their fatal system of idolatry, inducing for the sake of propitiating their supposed Deities, the violation of every humane and social feeling. And this in various instances ; but more especially in the dreadful acts of self-destruction and the immolation of the nearest relations, under the delusion of conforming to sacred religious rites. I have never ceased, I repeat, to contemplate these practices with the strongest feelings of regret, and

to view in them the moral debasement of a race who I cannot help thinking, are capable of better things ; whose susceptibility, patience, and mildness of character, render them worthy of a better destiny. Under these impressions, therefore, I have been impelled to lay before them genuine translations of parts of their scripture, which inculcates not only the enlightened worship of one God, but the purest principles of morality, accompanied with such notices as I deemed requisite to oppose the arguments employed by the Brahmuns in defence of their beloved system. Most earnestly do I pray that the whole may, sooner or later, prove efficiently in producing on the minds of Hindoos in general, a conviction of the rationality of believing in and adoring the Supreme Being only ; together with a complete perception and practice of that grand and comprehensive moral principle—Do unto others as ye would be done by.

আত্মানং রথিনং বিদ্ধি শরীরং রথমেব তু ।
 বুদ্ধিষ্ঠু সারথিং বিদ্ধি মনঃ প্রগ্রহমেব চ ॥
 ইন্দ্রিয়াণি হয়ানাহুর্কিষয়াংস্তেষু গোচরান্ ।
 আত্মেন্দ্রিয়মনোযুক্তং ভোক্তেত্যাহুর্মনীষিণঃ ॥

Consider the soul as a rider, the body as a car, the intellect its driver, the mind as its rein : the external senses are called the horses, restrained by the mind ; external objects are the roads : so wise men believe the soul united with the body, the senses and the mind, to be the partaker of the consequences of good or evil acts.

যস্তু বিজ্ঞানবান্ ভবত্যযুক্তেন মনসা সদা ।
 তস্যেন্দ্রিয়াণ্যবশ্যানি দুষ্ঠাংস্বাইব সারথে : ॥

If that intellect, which is represented as the driver, be indiscreet, and the rein of the mind loose, all the senses under the authority of the intellectual power become unmanageable ; like wicked horses under the control of an unfit driver.

যস্তু বিজ্ঞানবান্ ভবতি যুক্তেন মনসা সদা ।
 তস্যেন্দ্রিয়াণি বশ্যানি সদাংস্বাইব সারথে : ॥

If the intellect be discreet and the rein of the mind firm, all the senses prove steady and manageable ; like good horses under an excellent driver.

যস্তু বিজ্ঞানবান্ ভবত্যমনস্কঃ সদাশুচিঃ ।
 ন সতৎপদমাশ্নোতি সংসারশাখিগচ্ছতি ॥

He, who has not a prudent intellect and steady mind, and who consequently lives always impure, cannot arrive at the divine glory, but descends to the world.

যস্তু বিজ্ঞানবান্ ভবতি সমনস্কঃ সদা শুচিঃ।

সন্ত তৎপদমাপ্নোতি যস্মাদ্ভূয়োন জায়তে ॥

He who has a prudent intellect and steady mind, and consequently lives always pure, attains that glory from whence he never will descend.

বিজ্ঞানসারথিযস্তু মনঃপ্রগৃহবান্নরঃ।

সৌধনঃপারমাপ্নোতি তদ্বিষ্ণোঃপরমং পদং ॥

Man who has intellect as his prudent driver, and a steady mind as his rein, passing over the paths of mortality, arrives at the high glory of the omnipresent God.

এষসর্কেষু ভূতেষু গুটোহ্মা ন প্রকাশতে।

দৃশ্যতে অগ্ন্যা বুদ্ধ্যা সূক্ষ্ময়া সূক্ষ্মদর্শিভিঃ ॥

God exists obscurely throughout the universe, consequently is not perceived, but he is known through the acute intellect constantly directed towards him by wise men of penetrating understandings.

উত্তিষ্ঠত জাগ্রত প্রাপ্য বরানিবোধত।

ক্ষুরস্য ধারা নিশিতা দুরত্যা দুর্গম্পথস্তৎকবয়োবদন্তি ॥

Rise up and awake from the sleep of ignorance; and having approached able teachers, acquire knowledge of God, the origin of the soul: for the way to the knowledge of God is considered by wise men difficult as the passage over the sharp edge of a razor.

নিত্যোহ্ নিত্যানাং চেতনশ্চেতনানাং যেকোবহূনাং যোবিদধাতি কামান্।
তমাত্মস্থং যেনুপশ্যন্তি ধীরাঃ তেষাং শান্তিঃশাশ্বতী নেতরেষাং ॥

God is eternal amidst the perishable universe; and is the source of sensation among all animate existences; and he alone assigns to so many objects their respective purposes: to those wise men who know him the ruler of the intellectual power, everlasting beatitude is allotted; but not to those who are void of that knowledge.

যদিদংকিঞ্চ জগৎ সর্কংপ্রাণএজতি নিঃসৃতং।

মহন্তয়ংবজ্রমুদ্যতংযএতদ্বিদুরমৃতাস্তে ভবন্তি ॥

God being eternal existence, the universe, whatsoever it.

is, exists and proceeds from him. He is the great dread of all heavenly bodies, as if he were prepared to strike them with thunderbolts ; so that none of them can deviate from their respective courses established by him. Those who know him as the eternal power acquire absorption.

ভয়াদম্যাগ্নিস্তপতি ভয়ান্তপতি সূর্যঃ ।

ভয়াদিন্দুশ বায়ুশ মৃত্যুর্ধাবতি পঞ্চমঃ ॥

Through his fear fire supplies us with heat ; and the sun, through his fear, shines regularly ; and also Indru, and air, and fifthly, death, are through his fear constantly in motion.

অব্যক্তাভূ পরঃপুরুষোব্যাপকোলিঙ্গএব চ ।

যজ্ঞাত্মা মুচ্যতে জন্তুরমৃতত্বং গচ্ছতি ॥

Superior to nature is God, who is omnipresent and without material effects : by acquisition of whose knowledge man becomes extricated from ignorance and distress, and is absorbed into Him after death.

ন সংদূশে তিষ্ঠতি রূপমস্যা ন চক্ষুষা পশ্যতি কশ্চনৈনং ।

হৃদা মনীষা মনসাভিক্শেপ্তোযএতদ্বিদুরমৃতাস্তে ভবন্তি ॥

His substance does not come within the reach of vision ; no one can apprehend him through the senses : By constant direction of the intellect, free from doubts, he perspicuously appears ; and those who know him in the prescribed manner, enjoy eternal life.

ঈশা বাসায়িদং সর্বং যৎ কিঞ্চ জগত্যাং জগৎ ।

তেন ত্যক্তেন ভুক্তীথা মাগৃধঃকস্যস্বিক্তনং ॥

ALL the material extension in this world, whatsoever it may be, should be considered as clothed with the existence of the Supreme regulating spirit : by thus abstracting thy mind from worldly thoughts, preserve thyself from self-sufficiency, and entertain not a covetous regard for property belonging to any individual.

তদেজতি তন্নৈজতি তদূরে তদ্বন্তিকে ।

তদন্তরস্য সর্বস্য তদু সর্বস্যাস্য বাহতঃ ॥

He, the Supreme Being, seems to move every where, although he in reality has no motion ; he seems to be distant

from those who have no wish to attain a knowledge respecting him, and he seems to be near to those who feel a wish to know him : but, in fact, He pervades the internal and external parts of this whole universe.

যন্ত সৰ্বাণি ভূতান্যাত্মন্যেবানুপশ্যতি ।

সৰ্বভূতেষু চাত্মানং ততোন বিজুগ্মসতে ॥

He, who perceives the whole universe in the Supreme Being (that is, he who perceives that the material existence is merely dependent upon the existence of the Supreme Spirit) ; and who also perceives the Supreme Being in the whole universe (that is, he who perceives that the Supreme Spirit extends over all material extension) ; does not feel contempt towards any creature whatsoever.

সপৰ্য্যগাচ্ছুক্ৰমকায়মব্রণমদ্বাবিরং শুদ্ধমপাপবিন্ধং ।

কবির্মনীষী পরিভূঃ স্বয়ং ভূর্যাতথ্যাতোর্থান্ বাদধাচ্ছাত্তীভ্যঃ সমাভ্যঃ ॥

He overspreads all creatures : is merely spirit, without the form either of any minute body, or of an extended one, which is liable to impression or organization : He is pure, perfect, omniscient, the ruler of the intellect, omnipresent, and the self-existence : He has from eternity been assigning to all creatures their respective purposes.

শ্রোত্রস্য শ্রোত্রং মনসোমনোযদ্বাচোহ বাচং স উ প্রাণস্য প্রাণশ্চক্ষুশ্চক্ষুঃ ।

অতিমুচ্য ধীরাঃ প্রেত্যান্মল্লোকাদমৃতভবন্তি ॥

He, who is the sense of the sense of hearing ; the intellect of the intellect ; the essential cause of language ; the breath of breath ; the sense of the sense of vision ;—this is the being concerning whom you would enquire. Learned men having relinquished the notion of self-independence, and self-consideration from knowing the Supreme understanding to be the sole source, of sense, enjoy everlasting beatitude after their departure from this world.

ন তত্র চক্ষুর্গচ্ছতি ন বাগ্নচ্ছতি নোমনোনবিদ্বো ন বিজানীযো যথৈতদনুশিষ্যাৎ ।

অন্যদেব তদ্বিদি তাদথোঅবিদি তাদধি ।

ইতি শুক্রম পূৰ্বেষাং যেষে নন্তদ্ব্যাচচক্ষিরে ॥

Hence no vision can approach him, no language can describe him, no intellectual power can compass or determine

him. We know nothing of how the Supreme Being should be explained : he is beyond all that is within the reach of comprehension, and also beyond nature, which is above conception. Our ancient spiritual parents have thus explained him to us.

যদ্বাচানভ্যুদিতং যেন বাগভ্যুদ্যতে ।

তদেব ব্রহ্ম অং বিদ্ধি নেদং যদিদমুপাসতে ॥

He alone who has never been described by language, and who directs language to its meaning, is the Supreme Being, and not any specified thing which men worship : know THOU this.

যন্মনসান মনুতে যেনাহুর্মনোমতং ।

তদেব ব্রহ্ম অং বিদ্ধি নেদং যদিদমুপাসতে ॥

He alone whom understanding cannot comprehend, and who, as said by learned men, knows the real nature of understanding, is the Supreme Being, and not any specified thing which men worship : know THOU this.

যচ্চক্ষুষান পশ্যতি যেন চক্ষুঃষি পশ্যতি ।

তদেব ব্রহ্ম অং বিদ্ধি নেদং যদিদমুপাসতে ॥

He alone whom no one can conceive by vision, and by whose superintendence every one perceives the objects of vision, is the Supreme Being, and not any specified thing which men worship : know THOU this.

যৎশ্রোত্রেন ন শৃণোতি যেন শ্রোত্রমিদং শ্রুতং ।

তদেব ব্রহ্ম অং বিদ্ধি নেদং যদিদমুপাসতে ॥

He alone whom no one can hear through the sense of hearing, and who knows the real nature of the sense of hearing is the Supreme Being, and not any specified thing which men worship : know THOU this.

যৎপ্রাণেন ন প্রাণিতি যেন প্রাণঃ প্রণীয়তে ।

তদেব ব্রহ্ম অং বিদ্ধি নেদং যদিদমুপাসতে ॥

He alone whom no one can perceive through the sense of smelling, and who applies the sense of smelling to its objects, is the Supreme Being, and not any specified thing which men worship : know THOU this.

যস্যামতং তস্য মতং মতং যস্য ন বেদ সঃ ।

অবিজাতং বিজানতাং বিজাতমবিজানতাং ॥

He who believes that he cannot comprehend God, does know him ; and he who believes that he can comprehend God does not know him : as men of perfect understanding acknowledge him to be beyond comprehension ; and men of imperfect understanding suppose him to be within the reach of their simplest perception.

ইহ চেদবেদীদখসত্যমস্তি নচেদিহাবেদীন্মহতী বিনষ্টিঃ ।

ভূতেষু ভূতেষু বিচিন্ত্য ধীরাঃ প্রেত্যাশ্নান্নোকাদমৃত্যভবন্তি ॥

Whatever person has, according to the above stated doctrine, known God, is really happy, and whoever has not known him is subjected to great misery. Learned men, having reflected on the Spirit of God extending over all moveable as well as immoveable creatures, after their departure from this world are absorbed into the Supreme Being.

হে বিন্যে বেদি তব্য ইতি হ স্ম যদ্বাক্ষবিদো বদন্তি পরা চৈবাপরা চ ।

তত্রাপরা ঋগ্বেদোযজুর্বেদঃ সামবেদোথর্ববেদঃ শিক্ষা কণ্ঠো-
ব্যাকরণং নিরুক্তং ছন্দোজ্যোতিষমিতি ।

অথ পরা যয়া তদক্ষরমধিগম্যতে ॥

যত্তদদেদুশ্যমগ্রাহমগোত্রমবর্ণমচকুঃশ্রোত্রং তদপাণিপাদং নিত্যং

বিভুং সর্গগতং সুসূক্ষ্মং তদব্যয়ং যদ্বৃত্তযোনিং পরিপশ্যন্তি ধীরাঃ ॥

Those who have a thorough knowledge of the Vaidas, say that it should be understood that there are two sorts of knowledge ; one superior, and the other inferior : There are the Rig-Vaida, Yujoor-Vaida, Samu-Vaida, and Uthurv-Vaida ; and also their subordinate parts, consisting of Shiksha, or a treatise on pronunciation ; Kulpu, or the science that teaches the details of rites according to the different branches of the Vaidas ; Vyákurunu, or grammar ; Nirookti, or explanation of the peculiar terms of the Vaidas ; Ch, hundus, or prosody ; and Jyoatish, or astronomy : which all belong to the inferior kind of knowledge. Now the superior kind is conveyed by the Oopunishuds and is that through which absorption into the eternal Supreme Being may be obtained. That Supreme Being who is the subject of the superior learning, is

beyond the apprehension of the senses, and out of the reach of the corporeal organs of action, and is without origin, colour, or magnitude ; and has neither eye nor ear, nor has he hand or foot. He is everlasting, all-pervading, omnipresent, absolutely incorporeal, unchangeable, and it is he whom wise men consider as the origin of the universe.

যথোৰ্গনাভিঃ সৃজতে গৃহতে চ যথা পৃথিব্যামোষধয়ঃসম্ভবন্তি ।

যথা সতঃ পুরুষাৎ কেশলোমানি তথাক্করাৎ সম্ভবতীহ বিশ্বং ॥

In the same way as the cobweb is created and absorbed by the spider independently of exterior origin, as vegetables proceed from the earth, and hair and nails from animate creatures, so the Universe is produced by the eternal Supreme Being.

অবিদ্যায়াং বহুধা বর্তমানাবয়ং কৃতার্থাইত্যভিমন্যন্তি বালাঃ ।

যং কর্ম্মিণোন প্রবেদয়ন্তি রাগাত্তেনাতুরাঃ ক্লীণলোকাশ্চবন্তে ॥

Engaged in various manners of rites and sacrifices, the ignorant are sure of obtaining their objects : but as the observers of such rites, from their excessive desire of fruition, remain destitute of a knowledge of God, they afflicted with sorrows, descend to this world after the time of their celestial gratification is expired. Those complete fools believe, that the rites prescribed by the Vaidas in performing sacrifices, and those laid down by the Smrities at the digging of wells and other pious liberal actions, are the most beneficial, and have no idea that a knowledge of, and faith in God, are the only true sources of bliss.

তদেতৎ সত্যং যথা সুদীপ্তাৎ পাবকাদ্বিষ্ফুলিঙ্গাঃ সহস্রশঃ প্রভবন্তে সরুপাঃ ।
তথাক্করাদ্বিবিধাঃ সোম্য ভাবাঃ প্রজায়ন্তে তত্র চৈবাপিযন্তি ॥

He, the subject of the superior knowledge, alone is true. As from a blazing fire thousands of sparks of the same nature proceed, so from the eternal Supreme Being (O beloved pupil) various souls come forth, and again they return into him.—He is immortal, and without form or figure, omnipresent, pervading external and internal objects, unborn, without breath or individual mind, pure and superior to eminently exalted nature.

আবিঃসম্মিহিতং গুহ্যচরন্মায় মহৎ পদমত্রৈতৎ সমর্পিতং ।
 এজৎ প্রাণম্মিমিষচ্চ যদেতজ্জানথ সদসদ্বরেণ্যং পরংবিজ্ঞা-
 নাদযদ্বরিষ্ঠং প্রজানাং ॥

God, as being resplendent and most proximate to all creatures, is styled the operator in the heart ; he is great and all-sustaining ; for on him rest all existences, such as those that move, those that breathe, those that twinkle, and those that do not. Such is God. You all contemplate him as the support of all objects, visible and invisible, the chief end of human pursuit. He surpasses all human understanding, and is the most pre-eminent.

যদর্চিমদ্যদগুভ্যোহু যস্মিন্ লোকানিহিতালোকিনশ্চ ।
 তদেতদক্ষরং ব্রহ্ম স প্রাণস্তদুবাঙ্কুরঃ ।
 তদেতৎ সত্যং তদমৃতং তদেন্ধব্যং সৌম্য বিদ্ধি ॥

He, who irradiates the Sun and other bodies, who is smaller than an atom, larger than the world, and in whom is the abode of all the divisions of the universe, and of all their inhabitants, is the eternal God ; the origin of breath, speech, and intellect, as well as of all the senses. He, the origin of all the senses, the true and unchangeable Supreme Being, should be meditated upon ; and do thou (O beloved pupil) apply constantly thy mind to him.

অস্মিন্ দ্যৌঃপৃথিবী চান্তরিক্ষমোতং মনঃ সহ প্রাণৈশ্চ সৰ্বৈঃ ।
 তমেবৈকং জানথ আত্মানমন্যাবাচোবিমুঞ্চথ অমৃতমৈষসেতুঃ ॥

In God, heaven, earth, and space reside, and also intellect, with breath and all the senses. Do you strive to know solely the ONE Supreme Being, and forsake all other discourse ; because this (a true knowledge respecting God) is the only way to eternal beatitude.

হিরণ্ময়ে পরে কোশে বিরজং ব্রহ্ম নিষকলং ।
 তচ্ছুভ্রং জ্যোতিষাং জ্যোতিস্তদ্যদাত্মবিদোবিদুঃ ॥

The Supreme Being, free from stain, devoid of figure or form, and entirely pure, the light of all lights, resides in the heart, his resplendently excellent seat : those discriminating men, who know him as the origin of intellect and of self consciousness, are possessed of the real notion of God.

ব্রহ্মৈবেদমমৃতং পূৰ্ণস্তাদ্ৰুক্ষ পশ্চাদ্ৰুক্ষ দক্ষিণতশ্চোত্তরেণ ॥

অধশ্চোৰ্দ্ধ্বং প্রসূতং ব্রহ্মৈবেদং বিশ্বমিদং বরিষ্ঠং ॥

God alone is immortal : he extends before, behind, to the right, to the left, beneath and above. He is the Supreme, and all in all.

সত্যমেব জয়তে নানৃত্যং সত্যেন পস্থা বিততো দেবযানঃ ।

যেনাক্রমন্ত্যযোহাপ্তকামায়ত্রতং সত্যস্য পরমং নিধানং ॥

He who practises veracity prospers, and not he who speaks untruths : the way to eternal beatitude is open to him who without omission speaketh truth. This is that way through which the saints, extricated from all desires, proceed to the supreme existence, the consequence of the observance of truth.

বৃহচ্চ তদ্ব্যমচিন্ত্যরূপং সূক্ষ্মাচ্চ তৎসূক্ষ্মতরং বিভাতি ।

দূরাং সুদূরে তদিহান্তিকে চ পশ্যৎস্থিহৈব নিহিতং গুহায়াং ॥

He is great and incomprehensible by the senses, and consequently his nature is beyond human conception. He, though more subtle than vacuum itself, shines in various ways — From those who do not know him, is at a greater distance than the limits of space, and to those who acquire a knowledge of him, he is most proximate ; and while residing in animate creatures he is perceived obscurely by those who apply their thoughts to him.

ন চক্ষুষা গৃহতে নাপি বাচ্য নানৈর্দেবৈস্তপসা কৰ্ম্মণা বা ।

জ্ঞানপ্রসাদেন বিশুদ্ধসত্ত্বতম্ভ তং পশ্যতে নিষ্কলং ধ্যায়মানঃ ॥

He is not perceptible by vision, nor is he describable by means of speech : neither can he be the object of any of the other organs of sense ; nor can he be conceived by the help of austerities or religious rites : but a person whose mind is purified by the light of true knowledge, through incessant contemplation, perceives him the most pure God.

এষোণুরাত্মা চেতসা বেদিতব্যো যস্মিন্ প্রাণঃ পঞ্চধা সৎ বিবেশ ।

প্রাণৈশ্চিহ্নং সৰ্ব্বমোতং প্রজানাং যস্মিন্ বিশুদ্ধে বিভবত্যেষ আত্মা ॥

Such is the invisible Supreme Being : he should be observed in the heart, wherein breath, consisting of five species, rests. The mind being perfectly freed from impurity,

God who spreads over the mind and all the senses, imparts a knowledge of himself to the heart.

নামমাত্ৰা প্রবচনেন লভ্যেয়ান মেধয়া ন বহুনা ক্রতেন ।

যমেবৈষবৃণুতে তেন লভ্যস্তস্মৈষআত্মা বৃণুতে তনুং স্বাৎ ॥

A knowledge of God, the prime object, is not acquirable from study of the Vaidas, nor through retentive memory, nor yet by continual hearing of spiritual instruction : but he who seeks to obtain a knowledge of God is gifted with it, God rendering himself conspicuous to him.

বেদান্তবিজ্ঞানমুনিশ্চিতার্থাঃ সৎন্যাসযোগাদ্ভ্যতয়ঃ শুদ্ধমন্ত্রাঃ ।

তে ব্রহ্মলোকেষু পরান্তকালে পরামৃতাঃ পরিমুচ্যন্তি মর্মে ॥

All the votaries who repose on God alone their firm belief, originating from a knowledge of the Vaidanta, and who, by forsaking religious rites, obtain purification of mind, being continually occupied in divine reflections during life, are at the time of death entirely freed from ignorance and absorbed into God.

যথা নদ্যঃ স্যন্দমানাঃ সমুদ্রেহস্তংগচ্ছন্তি নামরূপে বিহায় ।

তথা বিদ্বান্নামরূপাদ্বিমুক্তঃ পরাৎপরং পুরুষমুপৈতি দিব্যং ॥

As all rivers flowing into the ocean disappear and lose their respective appellations and forms, so the person who has acquired a knowledge of and faith in God, freeing himself from the subjugation of figure and appellation, is absorbed into the supreme immaterial and omnipresent existence.

SECOND
DISCOURSE

On the Spiritual Worship of God,

DELIVERED

BY

RAMCHUNDRU SHURMA,

At the Brahma Samaj,

ON WEDNESDAY, THE 13TH OF BHADRU,

1750 SHUKABDA,

TRANSLATED FROM BENGALLEE

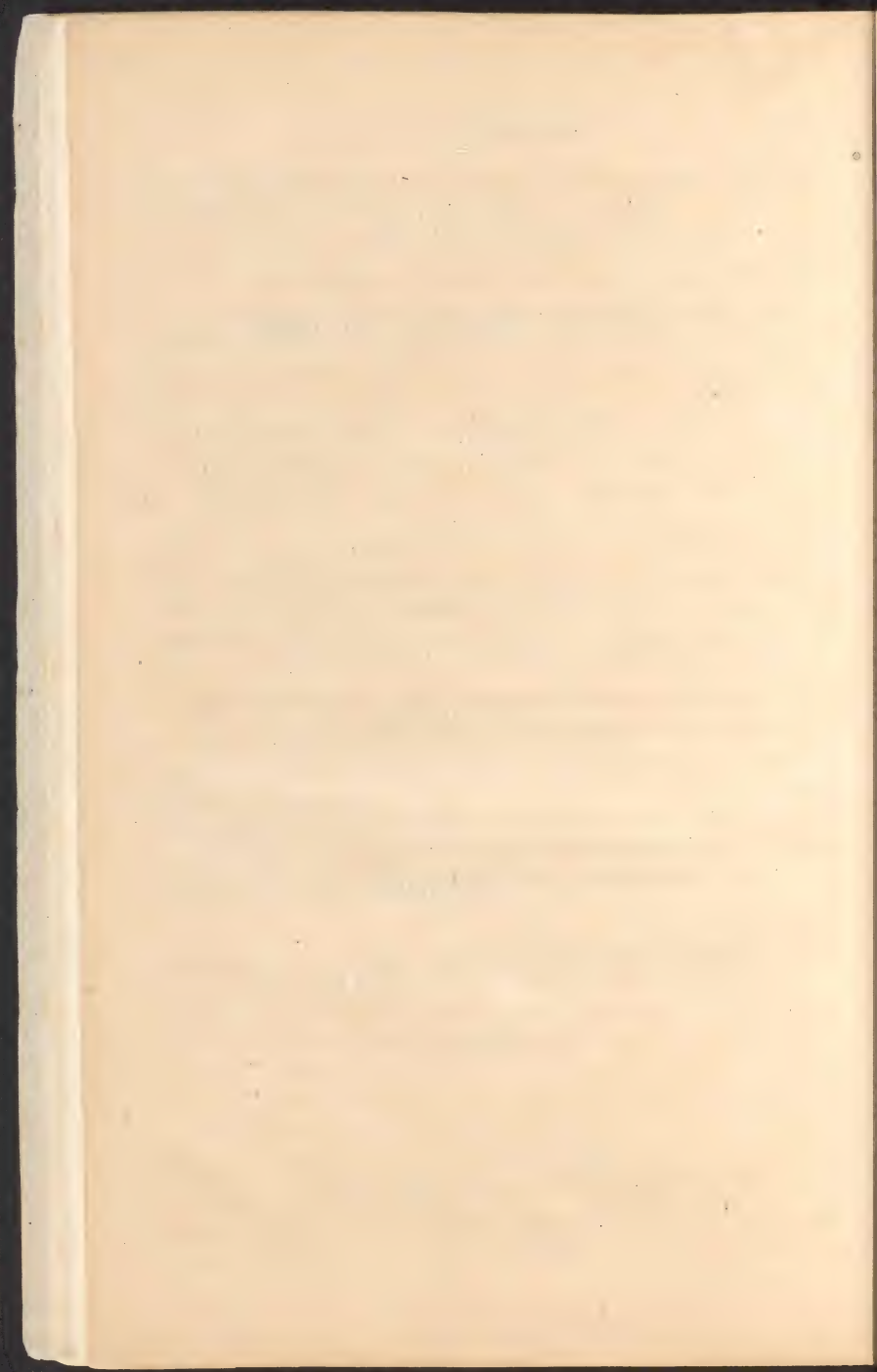
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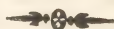
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“GOD IS ONE ONLY WITHOUT AN EQUAL.”



প্রশান্তচিত্তায় শমাস্থিতায় ।

মুণ্ডকশ্রুতিঃ ।

“A wise Teacher will properly instruct his obedient Pupil freed from servile subjection to the external senses and possessed of tranquillity of mind, in the superior knowledge through which he may elevate his mind to the eternal Supreme.”

(Moonduka.)

যথোক্তান্যপি কৰ্ম্মাণি পরিহায় দ্বিজোত্তমঃ ।

আত্মজ্ঞানে শমে চ স্যাদ্বেদাভ্যাসে চ যতনবান্ ॥

মুনুঃ ॥

“Thus must every one belonging to the highest class of the twiceborn, though he neglect the ceremonial rites enjoined in the Shastru, endeavour to attain a knowledge of God, to control the senses, and to repeat the Vaidas.” (Munoo Ch. XII, v. 92.)

In the address of last week we spoke at some length of the direct worship of God who can only be apprehended by the mind as the author of the universe, and showed the superior excellence of this spiritual worship on the three grounds of revelation, reason, and experience ; and we now proceed to explain how this kind of adoration is to be offered. The illustrious Munoo in the Fourth Chapter of his Insti-

tutes, treating of economics and private morals, remarks that there are three classes of spiritual worshippers of God, and describes the last of these classes in the 24th verse as follows, according to the commentary of the learned Koollook Bhuttu :

জানেনৈবাপরে বিপ্রায়জন্ত্যৈতৈর্মথৈঃ সদা ।

জানমূলংক্রিয়ামেষাং পশ্যন্তোজানচক্ষুষা ॥

“ Some Brahmuns incessantly perform those ceremonies that are prescribed to householders, but they do so only mentally, seeing with the eye of divine learning (the Oopunishuds) that the Supreme Spirit is the origin of all things.” (Munoo Ch. IV, v. 24). The learned Koollook Bhuttu concludes this subject with the following observation :

শ্লোকত্রয়েণ ব্রহ্মনিষ্ঠানাং বেদমন্ত্যাসিনাং গৃহস্থানাযমী বিধয়ঃ ॥

“ The three verses inculcate those duties for such householders as worship God spiritually and have left off the observance of religious ceremonies.”

From these authorities it is evident that spiritual worship by a householder consists in the contemplation of God as the support of the universe.

We learn from the verse of Munoo quoted in the beginning of this address that assiduous exertions to restrain the passions and feelings and to study the Vaida such as the Oopunishuds, &c. form the indispensable duties of worshippers ; that is, that it should be the constant endeavour of a worshipper of the Supreme Spirit to control his bodily organs, his external senses, and the mind itself, that they may not occasion any injury to himself or to his fellow creatures ; but on the contrary conduce to the benefit both of himself and others.

God has given only to man the power of subduing the passions—a power of which the lower animals are not possessed, and consequently when their passions are excited, they frequently overwhelm themselves with misery and inflict injuries on other creatures. A man therefore who, though blessed with the power of restraining his senses, does not labour to bring them under proper control, degrades himself in this life to an equality with the beasts and is exposed to misery in the life to come. He subjects himself to legal punishments, to the censure of his neighbours, to bodily

diseases, and to remorse of conscience. He renders himself incapable of meditating on the Supreme Spirit and becomes an enemy to human society,

The different senses and corporal organs have the same relation to each other as the different branches of a tree in the exhibition of fire-works. The fire put to one branch is immediately communicated to all the others and consumes the whole ; and in the same manner the evil propensity which takes its rise in one faculty of the mind or body, pervades the others and in the end entirely ruins the man. Thus for example, a man hears of a certain beautiful object. Being thus attracted to it, he in the next place is anxious to see it, and after seeing it he perhaps desires to touch what has so far engaged his attention. Then come the members of the body, the hand, the foot, &c. to the assistance of his senses, and thus the individual is ruined by the combined operation against him of his various faculties. So also by contiguity to any person or thing the desire arises to obtain the object—when the individual is disappointed, he is filled with wrath—when under the influence of this passion, he acts without consideration of consequences—and in this way being exposed to the commission of murder, suicide, and every other crime he endangers his happiness both in a present and future world.

আত্মানং রথিনং বিদ্ধি শরীরং রথমেব তু ।
 বুদ্ধিস্ত সারথিঃ বিদ্ধি মনঃ প্রগ্রহমেব চ ॥
 ইন্দ্রিয়ানি হয়ানাহুর্জিহ্বাংস্তেষু গোচরান্ ।
 আত্মেন্দ্রিয়মনৌযুক্তং ভোক্তেত্যাহুর্মনীষিণঃ ॥
 যস্তু বিজ্ঞানবান্ ভবত্যযুক্তেন মনসা সদা ।
 তস্যেন্দ্রিয়ান্যবশ্যানি দূর্য্যাস্থাইব সারথিঃ ॥
 যস্তু বিজ্ঞানবান্ ভবতি যুক্তেন মনসা সদা ।
 তস্যেন্দ্রিয়ানি বশ্যানি সদাস্থাইব সারথিঃ ॥
 যস্তু বিজ্ঞানবান্ ভবত্যমনস্কঃ সদাহ শৃটিঃ ।
 ন স তৎপদমাপ্নোতি সংসারঞ্চাধিগচ্ছতি ॥
 যস্তু বিজ্ঞানবান্ ভবতি সমনস্কঃ সদা শৃটিঃ ।

সত্ত্ব তৎপদমাপ্নোতি যস্মাদ্ভ্যুয়োহ জায়তে ॥

“ Consider the soul as a rider, the body as a car, the

“intellect its driver, the mind as its rein. The external senses are described as the horses, restrained by the mind ; external objects are the roads. So wise men believe the soul united with the body, the senses, and the mind to be the partaker of the consequences of good or evil acts.”

“If the intellect, which is represented as the driver, be indiscreet and the rein of the mind loose, all the senses under the authority of the intellectual power become unmanageable, like restive horses under the control of an unskilful driver.”

“If the intellect be discreet and the rein of the mind tight, all the senses prove steady and manageable ; like good horses under an excellent driver.”

“He who has not a prudent intellect and steady mind and who consequently leads an immoral life cannot attain the divine glory, but sinks again to the miseries of the world.”

“He who has a prudent intellect and steady mind, and consequently leads a moral life, attains that glory from which he never will descend.”

(Kuthu Oopunishud.)

ইন্দ্রিয়ানাং বিচরতাং বিষয়েষু পহারিষু ।

সংযমে যত্নমাতিক্ষেৎ বিদ্বান্ যন্তেব বাজিনাং ॥

মনুঃ ॥

“In restraining the organs of the senses which run wild among ravishing sensualities, a wise man will apply diligent care, like a charioteer in managing restive horses.” (Munoo Ch. 11. v. 88.)

In other systems of religion, as well as in the spiritual system of the Vaidas, the duty of restraining the passions has been enjoined ; but in them the prescriptions for worship, and the forms for sacrifices and for other external ceremonies are made of principal consideration ; while the subjugation of the passions holds a secondary place. In the spiritual system of the Vaidas, however, we may omit all the external forms, but the restraint of the passions is indispensable as being the only constituent of true worship.

According to the verse of Munoo quoted above, the second duty of a spiritual worshipper of God is to be diligent in the study of the Vaidas such as the Prunuvu, the Oopunishud,

&c, and this duty also is essential, because man by habit is not capable of acquiring any idea without the assistance of sound. He should therefore think of the Deity with the aid of the Prunuvu or the word “Om” which signifies the Supreme Being and also of the aphorism which teaches that “there is one only without an equal” and such other verses of the Vaidas as treat of God.

করন্তি সর্বা বৈদিকোজুহোতি যজতি ক্রিয়াঃ ।

অক্ষরং অক্ষয়ং জেয়ং ব্রহ্ম চৈব প্রজাপতিঃ ॥

মনুঃ ॥

“All rites ordained in the Vaidas, such as oblations to fire and solemn offerings, pass away ; but the letter “Om” is considered that which passes not away ; since it is a symbol of the Most High, the Lord of created beings.” (Munoo Ch. 11. v. 84.)

By reflecting on such verses of the Vaidas as these—

ভয়াদস্যগ্নিস্তপতি ভয়াত্তপতি সূর্য্যঃ ।

“Through his fear fire supplies us with heat ; and the sun through his fear shines regularly, &c.”

প্রাণাপানৌ ব্রীহিয়বৌ তপশ্চ ॥

“By whom breath and vegetables are created, &c.”

—man is led to acknowledge his obligations to the Creator, recollecting that the benefits he every moment derives from fire, the air, the sun ; from rice, barley, drugs, fruits, roots and other things have all their origin in God alone. The purport of such verses as the following should also be reflected on viz.

সত্যমেব জয়তে নানৃত্যং ॥

“He who practises veracity prospers, and not he who speaks untruths,”

Since by veracity alone, not by falsehood, the happiness of a present and a future world is attainable and therefore truth should be made the invariable rule of conduct.

If a person who endeavours to restrain his passions should at any time lapse into sin, the expiation required is sincere repentance and an earnest endeavour to avoid similar transgressions.

অজ্ঞানং যদি বা মোহাৎ কৃত্বা কৰ্ম্ম বিগৰ্হিতং ।

তস্মাদ্ভিমুক্তিমশিচ্ছন্ দ্বিতীয়ং ন সমাচরেৎ ॥

“ If he commit sin, and actually repent, that sin shall be removed from him. Provided he say, ‘ I will sin thus no more,’ he may be pardoned by an actual abstinence from guilt.” (Munoo Ch. XI. v. 231.)

I now, in conformity with our principles, pronounce a benediction on those present in this assembly who are willing to receive it, by reciting the following ancient stanza.

হংসা : শুক্লকৃতায়েন শুকাল্শ হরিতীকৃতা : ।

ময়ূরাশ্চিত্রিতায়েন সতে ভৰ্ভা ভবিষ্যতি ॥

“ May he who has made the swan so beautifully white, and the parrot of a golden hue, and has painted the peacock with variegated colours, preserve every one of you.”

“ GOD IS ONE ONLY WITHOUT AN EQUAL.”

SIXTH
DISCOURSE

On the Spiritual Worship of God,

DELIVERED

BY

RAMCHUNDRU SHURMA,

At the Brahma Samaj,

ON SATURDAY, THE 13TH OF ASHWIN,

1750 SHUKABDA,

TRANSLATED FROM BENGALLEE

BY

TARACHAND CHUKRUVURTEE.

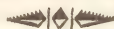
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“GOD IS ONE ONLY WITHOUT AN EQUAL,”



সত্যমায়তনং ॥

কেনোপনিষদ্ ॥

“Truth is the abode of divine knowledge.”
(Kainopunishud.)

মৌনং সত্যং বিশিষ্যতে ॥

মনুঃ ॥

“The declaration of truth is more excellent than austere silence.”

(Munoo.)

In the second discourse we merely observed that it was essentially necessary for a spiritual worshipper to speak the truth ; we shall now enter more particularly into the subject. We have seen it asserted in the text of the Vaidas above quoted that he only is the possessor of spiritual knowledge who speaks the truth, and we likewise find it declared by the Institutes of Munoo that the speaking of truth is valued above the highly meritorious act of observing deep meditative silence. On the mode of speaking the truth Munoo lays down the following particular injunctions :

সত্যমুয়াৎপ্রিয়ং ক্রয়াৎ ন ক্রয়াৎ সত্যমপ্রিয়ং ।

প্রিয়ঞ্চ নানৃত্যং ক্রয়াদেষধর্মঃ সনাতনঃ ॥

মনুঃ ॥

“Let him say what is true, but let him say what is

pleasing ; let him speak no disagreeable truth, nor let him speak agreeable falsehood : this is a primeval rule." (Ch : IV. v. 138.)

The first injunction is that the truth is to be spoken—that is, one should speak of a thing as he has seen and heard it and not otherwise. The second injunction is that what a man speaks should be agreeable, that is, it ought to be agreeable to the person spoken to. Here two questions arise ; namely, first, whether or not an unpleasant truth is to be told. This question is set at rest by the third injunction, namely, that except in giving evidence and under such like circumstances, the truth, if unpleasant, should not be told ; as for example, to tell a lame person that he is so is the truth, but it is disagreeable to him and therefore he should not be so told ; for, you incur no sin by not calling him lame, nor is there any thing wrong in it, but on the other hand by calling him so you hurt his feelings. The second question is that as Munoo enjoins us to speak what is agreeable, is or is not a lie, if agreeable, to be spoken ? For this reason the fourth injunction is laid down, namely, that an agreeable falsehood should not be told ; as for instance, to tell an illiterate man that he is learned is certainly pleasing to him, but as it is in fact a lie, it should not be spoken ; for the speaker incurs sin by uttering a falsehood, which moreover being productive of conceit in the person to whom it is spoken, makes him a constant object of ridicule. The purport of the whole of the above passage therefore is, that when it is necessary to speak any thing, the truth only should be spoken, and never an untruth. In the commentary on the Kainopunishud the venerable author quotes the following passage of a Smriti in which the excellence of truth is thus illustrated by a familiar example in common life :

অশ্বমেধসহস্রাঙ্ক সত্যঞ্চ তুলয়া ধৃতং ।

অশ্বমেধসহস্রাঙ্কি সত্যমেবাতিরিচ্যতে ॥

স্মৃতি : ॥

“ By performing one hundred Ushwumedhs (the Sacrifice of the highest order) one attains the dignity of an Indru (the sovereign of the upper region) ; and a thousand of these Ushwumedhs being placed on one side of a balance to be

weighed against one single truth put on the other, the single truth was found to preponderate.

The venerable Munoo in speaking of the distinguishing character of the Sutyu Yoog (the first or golden age) observes as follows :

চতুষ্কোপাৎ সকলোদ্যমঃ সত্যৈশ্চৈব কৃতে যুগে ॥

মনুঃ ॥

“ In the Kritu age the genius of truth and virtue stood firm and complete.”

(Ch. I. v. 81.)

This passage was thought liable to the following objections, that as truth was included in all righteousness, what necessity was there, after mentioning all righteousness generally, to speak of truth in particular. The point is thus decided by the venerable Koolloock Bhuttu :

সকলধৰ্ম্মশ্রেষ্ঠত্বাৎ সত্যস্য পৃথগ্ৰপাদানং ॥

“ Truth is above all other righteousness and has therefore been particularly mentioned.”

In the Kritu Yoog the practice of truth (or Sutyu) prevailed in its full extent, and therefore that Yoog has been distinguished by the name of Sutyu Yoog.

Reason also teaches us to consider truth superior to all other righteousness. The practice of this virtue alone puts an end to almost all sinful acts, for robbery, theft, adultery, the return of evil for good, the withholding of deposits and all such sinful acts can seldom be perpetrated without taking shelter under falsehoods. It is an evident fact that when a thief sets out with the intention of committing a theft, should he be questioned by a person as to the place he is going to, he will mention some place different from the one where he intends to go ; and if he should carry any weapons with him, he will describe them differently from what they are, or should he effect his entrance beforehand into the house intended to be robbed, he will describe his caste, his residence, and his motives all contrary to the truth. In the same manner adultery and all other immoral acts seek shelter under falsehoods. The practice of truth would likewise put an end to almost all litigation between individuals ; for, if the debtor and creditor, the person who places a thing

in deposit and the person who keeps it, the brother who is to give and the brother who is to receive a share (in the ancestral property) and such others dealt honestly, there would be little occasion for disputes.

In treating of witnesses Munoo has said.

যমোবৈবস্বতোদেবো যন্তু বৈষ হৃদিস্থিতঃ ।

তেন চেদবিবাদস্তে মা গঙ্গাং মা কুরুন্ গমঃ ॥

মনু : ॥

“ If thou beest not at variance, by speaking falsely, with Yumu, the subduer of all ; or with Vaivuswutu, the punisher ; or with that great divinity, who dwells in thy breast, go not on a pilgrimage to the Gunga, nor to the plains of Kooroo, for thou hast no need of expiation.”

(Ch. VIII. v, 92.)

When an attempt is made in the Vaidas to describe the nature of the Supreme Being the first epithet made use of is “ True” and of the three names by which the Supreme Being is described in the Bhuguvudgeeta the last is “ True.”

Hence the duty of speaking the truth constitutes a worship offered to God directly, and as falsehood is opposed to his nature, the utterance of it is an act of disobedience to Him. It therefore becomes necessary for a spiritual worshipper of the Supreme Being to speak the truth by all means and with all his heart.

I now, in conformity with our principles, pronounce a benediction on those present in this assembly who are willing to receive it, by reciting the following ancient stanza—May he through fear of whom the air passes in circulation, through fear of whom the sun gives us heat, and who directs all our understandings, preserve every one of you.

“ GOD IS ONE ONLY WITHOUT AN EQUAL.”

&c, and this duty also is essential, because man by habit is not capable of acquiring any idea without the assistance of sound. He should therefore think of the Deity with the aid of the Prunuvu or the word "Om" which signifies the Supreme Being and also of the aphorism which teaches that "there is one only without an equal" and such other verses of the Vaidas as treat of God.

ক্ষরন্তি সৰ্বাবৈদিক্যাজুহোতি যজতি ক্রিয়াঃ ।

অক্ষরং অক্ষয়ং জ্যেয়ং ব্রহ্ম চৈব প্রজাপতিঃ ॥

মনুঃ ॥

"All rites ordained in the Vaidas, such as oblations to fire and solemn offerings, pass away ; but the letter "Om" is considered that which passes not away ; since it is a symbol of the Most High, the Lord of created beings." (Munoo Ch. 11. v. 84.)

By reflecting on such verses of the Vaidas as these—

ভয়াদস্যগ্নিস্তুপতি ভয়াত্তপতি সূর্য্যঃ ।

"Through his fear fire supplies us with heat ; and the sun through his fear shines regularly, &c."

প্রাণাপানৌ ব্রীহিয়বৌ তপশ্চ ॥

"By whom breath and vegetables are created, &c."

—man is led to acknowledge his obligations to the Creator, recollecting that the benefits he every moment derives from fire, the air, the sun ; from rice, barley, drugs, fruits, roots and other things have all their origin in God alone. The purport of such verses as the following should also be reflected on viz.

সত্যমেব জয়তে নানৃত্যং ॥

"He who practises veracity prospers, and not he who speaks untruths,"

Since by veracity alone, not by falsehood, the happiness of a present and a future world is attainable and therefore truth should be made the invariable rule of conduct.

If a person who endeavours to restrain his passions should at any time lapse into sin, the expiation required is sincere repentance and an earnest endeavour to avoid similar transgressions.

অজ্ঞানাৎ যদি বা মোহাৎ কৃত্বা কৰ্ম বিগৰ্হিতং ।

তস্মাদ্বিমুক্তিমস্থিচ্ছন্ দ্বিতীয়ং ন সমাচরেৎ ॥

“ If he commit sin, and actually repent, that sin shall be removed from him. Provided he say, ‘ I will sin thus no more,’ he may be pardoned by an actual abstinence from guilt.” (Munoo Ch. XI. v. 231.)

I now, in conformity with our principles, pronounce a benediction on those present in this assembly who are willing to receive it, by reciting the following ancient stanza.

হংসা : শুক্লীকৃত্যেন শুকাশ্চ হরিতীকৃত্য : ।

ময়ূরাশ্চিত্রিত্যেন সতে ভৰ্গা ভবিষ্যতি ॥

“ May he who has made the swan so beautifully white, and the parrot of a golden hue, and has painted the peacock with variegated colours, preserve every one of you.”

“ GOD IS ONE ONLY WITHOUT AN EQUAL.”

PREFACE.

TO

THE TRANSLATION

OF

The Ishopanishad,

BY

RAJAH RAMMOHUN ROY.

CALCUTTA:

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1844.



The most learned Vyasa shows, in his work of the Vaidanta, that all the texts of the Vaidas, with one consent, prove but the Divinity of that Being, who is out of the reach of comprehension and beyond all description. For the use of the public, I have made a concise translation of that celebrated work into Bengalee, and the present is an endeavour to translate the principal Chapters of the Vaidas, in conformity to the Comments of the great Shanker-Acharya. The translation of the Ishopanishad belonging to the Yajur, the second division of the Vaidas, being already completed, I have put it into the press ; and the others will successively be printed, as soon as their translation is completed. It is evident, from those authorities, that the sole regulator of the Universe is but one, who is omnipresent, far surpassing our powers of comprehension ; above external sense ; and whose worship is the chief duty of mankind and the sole cause of eternal beatitude ; and that all that bear figure and appellation are inventions. Should it be asked, whether the assertions found in the Puranas and Tantras, &c. respecting the worship of the several gods and goddesses, are false, or whether Puranas and Tantras are not included in the Shastra, the answer is this :—The Purana and Tantra, &c. are of course to be considered as Shastra, for they repeatedly declare God to be one and above the apprehension of external and internal senses ; they indeed expressly declare the divinity of many gods and goddesses, and the modes of their worship ; but they reconcile those contradictory assertions by affirming frequently, that the directions to worship any figured beings are only applicable to those, who are

incapable of elevating their minds to the idea of an invisible Supreme Being, in order that such persons, by fixing their attention on those invented figures, may be able to restrain themselves from vicious temptations, and that those that are competent for the worship of the invisible God, should disregard the worship of Idols. I repeat a few of these declarations as follows. The authority of Yamadagni is thus quoted by the great Raghunandana :

“ চিন্ময়স্যাদ্বিতীয়স্য নিষ্কলস্যামরীরিণঃ ।

উপাসকানাং কার্যার্থং ব্রহ্মণোরূপকল্পনা ॥

রূপস্থানাং দেবতানাং পুংস্ত্র্যাং শাদিকল্পনা । ”

যমদগ্নিস্মৃতিঃ ॥

“ For the benefit of those who are inclined to worship, figures are invented to serve as representations of God, who is merely understanding, and has no second, no parts nor figure ; consequently, to these representatives, either male or female forms and other circumstances are fictitiously assigned.”

In the second Chapter of the first part of the Vishnu Purana it is said ;

“ রূপনামাদিনির্দেশবিশেষণবিবর্জিতঃ ।

অপঙ্কয়বিনাশাভ্যাং পরিণামাত্রিজন্মভিঃ ।

বর্জিতঃ শক্যতে বক্তুং যঃ সদাস্তীতি কেবলং ॥ ”

বিষ্ণুপুরাণং ॥

“ God is without figure, epithet, definition or description. He is without defect, not liable to annihilation, change, pain or birth ; we can only say, that he who is the eternal being, is God.”

“ অস্মদেবামনুষ্যাণাং দিবিদেবামনীষিণাং ।

কাষ্ঠলোষ্ট্রেষু যুর্থানাং যুক্স্যাত্মনি দেবতা ॥ ”

শাতাতপবচনং ॥

“ The vulgar look for their gods in water ; men of more extended knowledge in celestial bodies ; the ignorant in wood, bricks, and stones ; but learned men in the universal soul.”

In the 84th Chapter of the tenth division of the Sri-Bhagavata, Chrishna says to Vyas and others :

“ কিং স্বপ্নতপসাং নৃণামর্জায়াং দেবচক্ষুষাং ।

দর্শনসপর্শনপ্রশ্নপ্রশ্নপাদার্চনাদিকং ॥ ”

ভাগবতং ॥

“ It is impossible for those who consider pilgrimage as devotion, and believe that the divine nature exists in the image, to look up to, communicate with, to petition and to revere true believers in God.”

“ যস্যাত্মবুদ্ধিঃ কুণপে ত্রিধাতুকে স্বধীঃ কলত্রাদিষু ভৌমইজ্যধীঃ ।

যন্তীর্থবুদ্ধিঃ সলিলে ন কহিঁচিৎ জনৈষুভিজ্জেষু সএব গোখরঃ ॥ ”

ভাগবতং ॥

“ He who views as the soul this body formed of phlegm, wind and bile, or regards only wife, children, and relations as himself (that is, he who neglects to contemplate the nature of the soul), he who attributes a divine nature to earthen images, and believes in the holiness of water, yet pays not such respect to those who are endowed with a knowledge of God, is as an ass amongst cows.”

In the 9th Chapter of the Cularnava it is written :

“ বিদিতে তু পরে তত্ত্বৈ বর্ণাভীতে হবিক্রিয়ে ।

কিঙ্করঅং হি গচ্ছন্তি মন্ত্রামন্ত্রাধিপৈঃসহ ॥ ”

কুলার্ণবঃ ॥

“ A knowledge of the Supreme Being, who is beyond the power of expression and unchangeable, being acquired, all gods and goddesses, and their texts which represent them, shall become slaves.”

“ পরে ব্রহ্মণি বিজ্ঞাতে সমস্তৈর্নিয়মৈরলং ।

তালবৃন্তেন কিং কার্য্যং লঙ্কে মলয়মাকুতে ॥ ”

কুলার্ণবঃ ॥

“ After a knowledge of the Supreme Being has been attained, there is no need to attend to ceremonies prescribed by Shastras—no want of a fan should be felt, when a soft southern wind is found to refresh.”

The Mahanirvana says,

“এবং শ্রুতানুসারেণ রূপাণি বিবিধানি চ।

কম্পিতানি হিতার্থায় ভক্তানামম্প্রমেধসাং ॥”

মহানির্ঝাণং ॥

“ Thus corresponding to the natures of different powers or qualities, numerous figures have been invented for the benefit of those who are not possessed of sufficient understanding.”

From the foregoing quotations it is evident, that though the Vaidas, Puranas, and Tantras, frequently assert the existence of the plurality of gods and goddesses, and prescribe the modes of their worship for men of insufficient understanding, yet they have also declared in a hundred other places, that these passages are to be taken merely in a figurative sense.

It cannot be alleged in support of Idolatry, that “although a knowledge of God is certainly above all things, still as it is impossible to acquire that knowledge, men should of course worship figured Gods ;” for, had it been impossible to attain a knowledge of the Supreme Being, the Vaidas and Purans, as well as Tantras, would not have instructed mankind to aim at such attainment ; as it is not to be supposed that directions to acquire what is obviously unattainable could be given by the Shastras, or even by a man of common sense. Should the Idolater say, “that the acquisition of a knowledge of God, although it is not impossible, is most difficult of comprehension,” I will agree with him in that point ; but infer from it, that we ought, therefore, the more to exert ourselves to acquire that knowledge ; but I highly lament to observe, that so far from endeavouring to make such an acquisition, the very proposal frequently excites his anger and displeasure.

Neither can it be alleged that the Vaidas, Puranas, &c. teach both the adoration of the Supreme Being and that of celestial gods and goddesses, but that the former is intended for Yatis,

or those that are bound by their profession to forsake all worldly considerations, and the latter for Laymen ; for, it is evident from the 48th Text of the 3d Chapter of the Vaidanta, that a householder also is required to perform the worship of the Supreme Being.

Manu, also, the chief of Hindoo lawgivers, after having prescribed all the varieties of rites and ceremonies, in Chapter 12th, Text 92, says,

“ যথোক্তান্যপি কৰ্ম্মাণি পরিহায় দ্বিজোত্তমঃ ।

আত্মজ্ঞানে শমে চ স্যাৎসেদাভ্যাসে চ যত্নবান্ ॥ ”

মনুঃ ॥

“ Thus must the chief of the twice-born, though he neglect the ceremonial rites mentioned in the Shastras, be diligent in attaining a knowledge of God, in controlling his organs of sense, and in repeating the Vaida.”

Again in the 4th Chapter, in describing the duties of Laymen, the same author says,

“ এতানেকে মহাবজ্ঞান্ যজ্ঞশাস্ত্রবিদোজনাঃ ।

অনীহমানাঃ সততমিন্দ্রিয়েষুব জুহুতি ॥ ”

মনুঃ ॥

“ Some, who well know the ordinances for the oblations, do not perform externally the five great sacraments, but continually make offerings in thier own organs of sensation and intellect ”

“ বাচ্যেকে জুহুতি প্রাণান্ প্রাণে বাচঞ্চ সৰ্বদা ।

বাচি প্রাণে চ পশ্যন্তোযজ্ঞনিৰ্দ্ধৃতিমক্ষয়াৎ ॥ ”

মনুঃ ॥

“ Some constantly sacrifice their breath in their speech, when they instruct others of God aloud, and their speech in their breath, when they meditate in silence, perceiving in their speech and breath thus employed the imperishable fruit of a sacrificial offering.”

“ জ্ঞানেনৈবাপরে বিপ্রায়জন্তোতৈৰ্ম্মথৈঃসদা ।

জ্ঞানমুলাৎ ক্রিয়ামেষাং পশ্যন্তোজ্ঞানচক্ষুষা ॥ ”

মনুঃ ॥

“Other Brahmuns incessantly perform those sacrifices only, seeing with the eye of divine learning, that the scriptural knowledge is the root of every ceremonial observance.”

In the Yagnyavalca it is written.

“ন্যায়ার্জিতধনস্তত্ত্বজাননিষ্ঠোহতিথিপ্রিয়ঃ।

শ্রাদ্ধকৃত্তস্যবাদী চ গৃহস্থোপি বিমুচ্যতে ॥”

যাজ্ঞবল্ক্যঃ ॥

“Even a householder, who acquires a livelihood honestly, has faith in the Supreme Being, shows hospitality to his guests, performs sacramental rites to his forefathers, and is in the practice of telling truth, shall be absorbed into the supreme essence.”

Should it be said, “It still remains unaccountable, that notwithstanding the Vaidas and Puranas repeatedly declare the unity of the Supreme Being, and direct mankind to adore him alone, yet the generality of Hindoos have a contrary faith, and continue to practise idolatry,” I would in answer request attention to the foundation on which the practical part of the Hindoo religion is built. Many learned Brahmuns are perfectly aware of the absurdity of idolatry, and are well informed of the nature of the purer mode of divine worship. But as in the rites, ceremonies, and festivals of idolatry, they find the source of their comforts and fortune, they not only never fail to protect idol worship from all attacks, but even advance and encourage it to the utmost of their power, by keeping the knowledge of their scriptures concealed from the rest of the people. Their followers too, confiding in these leaders, feel gratification in the idea of the Divine Nature residing in a being resembling themselves in birth, shape, and propensities; and are naturally delighted with a mode of worship agreeable to the senses, though destructive of moral principles, and the fruitful parent of prejudice and superstition.

Some Europeans, indued with high principles of liberality, but unacquainted with the ritual part of Hindoo idolatry, are disposed to palliate it by an interpretation which, though plausible, is by no means well founded. They are willing to imagine, that the idols which the Hindoos worship, are not viewed by them in the light of gods or as real personifications

of the divine attributes, but merely as instruments for raising minds to the contemplation of those attributes, which are respectively represented by different figures. I have frequently had occasion to remark, that many Hindoos also who are conversant with the English language, finding this interpretation a more plausible apology for idolatry than any with which they are furnished by their own guides, do not fail to avail themselves of it, though in repugnance both to their faith and to their practice. The declarations of this description of Hindoos naturally tend to confirm the original idea of such Europeans, who from the extreme absurdity of pure unqualified idolatry, deduce an argument against its existence. It appears to them impossible for men, even in the very last degree of intellectual darkness, to be so far misled as to consider a mere image of wood or of stone as a human being, much less as a divine existence. With a view, therefore, to do away any misconception of this nature which may have prevailed, I beg leave to submit the following considerations.

Hindoos of the present age, with a very few exceptions, have not the least idea that it is to the attributes of the Supreme Being, as figuratively represented by shapes corresponding to the nature of those attributes, they offer adoration and worship under the denomination of gods and goddesses. On the contrary, the slightest investigation will clearly satisfy every inquirer, that it makes a material part of their system to hold as articles of faith all those particular circumstances, which are essential to a belief in the independent existence of the objects of their idolatry as deities clothed with divine power.

Locality of habitation and a mode of existence analogous to their own views of earthly things, are uniformly ascribed to each particular god. Thus the devotees of Shiva, misconceiving the real spirit of the Scriptures, not only place an implicit credence in the separate existence of Shiva, but even regard him as an omnipotent being, the greatest of all the divinities, who, as they say, inhabit the northern mountain of Cailas; and that he is accompanied by two wives and several children, and surrounded with numerous attendants. In like manner the followers of Vishnu, mistaking the allegorical representations of the Shastras for relations of real

facts, believe him to be chief over all other gods, and that he resides with his wife and attendants on the summit of heaven. Similar opinions are also held by the worshippers of Calce, in respect to that goddess. And in fact, the same observations are equally applicable to every class of Hindoo devotees in regard to their respective gods and goddesses. And so tenacious are those devotees in respect to the honour due to their chosen divinities, that when they meet in such holy places as Haridwara, Pryaga, Shiva-Canchi, or Vishnu-Canchi in the Dakhin, the adjustment of the point of precedence not only occasions the warmest verbal altercations, but sometimes even blows and violence. Neither do they regard the images of those gods merely in the light of instruments for elevating the mind to the conception of those supposed beings ; they are simply in themselves made objects of worship. For whatever Hindoo purchases an idol in the market, or constructs one with his own hands, or has one made up under his own superintendence, it is his invariable practice to perform certain ceremonies, called *Pran-Pratisht'ha*, or the endowment of animation ; by which he believes that its nature is changed from that of the mere materials of which it is formed, and that it acquires not only life but supernatural powers. Shortly afterwards, if the idol be of the masculine gender, he marries it to a feminine one, with no less pomp and magnificence than he celebrates the nuptials of his own children. The mysterious process is now complete, and the god and goddess are esteemed the arbiters of his destiny, and continually receive his most ardent adoration.

At the same time, the worshipper of images ascribes to them at once the opposite natures of human and of super-human beings. In attention to their supposed wants as living beings, he is seen feeding, or pretending to feed them every morning and evening ; and as in the hot season he is careful to fan them, so in the cold he is equally regardful of their comfort, covering them by day with warm clothing, and placing them at night in a snug bed. But superstition does not find a limit here : the acts and speeches of the idols, and their assumption of various shapes and colours, are gravely related by the Brahmuns, and with all the marks of veneration are

firmly believed by their deluded followers. Other practices they have with regard to those idols which decency forbids me to explain. In thus endeavouring to remove a mistake, into which I have reason to believe many European gentlemen have been led by a benevolent wish to find an excuse for the errors of my countrymen, it is a considerable gratification to me to find that the latter have begun to be so far sensible of the absurdity of their real belief and practices, as to find it convenient to shelter them under such a cloak, however flimsy and borrowed. The adoption of such a subterfuge encourages me greatly to hope, that they will in time abandon what they are sensible cannot be defended ; and that, forsaking the superstition of idolatry, they will embrace the rational worship of the God of Nature, as enjoined by the Vaidas, and confirmed by the dictates of common sense.

The argument which is frequently alleged in support of idolatry is, that “ those who believe God to be omnipresent, “as declared by the doctrines of the Vaidanta, are required by “the tenets of such belief to look upon all existing creatures “as God, and to shew divine respect to birds, beasts, men, “women, vegetables, and all other existences ; and as practical “conformity to such doctrines is almost impossible, the worship of figured gods should be admitted.” This misrepresentation, I am sorry to observe, entirely serves the purpose intended, by frightening Hindoos in general from attending to the pure worship of the Supreme Regulator of the universe. But I am confident that the least reflection on the subject will clear up this point beyond all doubt, for the Vaidanta is well known as a work which inculcates only the unity of God ; but if every existing creature should be taken for a god by the followers of the Vaidanta, the doctrines of that work must be admitted to be much more at variance with that idea than those of the advocates of idolatry, as the latter are contented with the recognition of only a few millions of gods and goddesses, but the Vaidanta in that case must be supposed to admit the divinity of every living creature in nature. The fact is, that the Vaidanta, by declaring that “ God is every where, and every thing is in God,” means that nothing is absent from God, and nothing bears real existence except by the volition of God, whose existence is

the sole support of the conceived existence of the universe, which is acted upon by him in the same manner as a human body is by a soul. But God is at the same time quite different from what we see or feel.

The following texts of the Vaidanta are to this effect (11th text of the 2d section of the 3d chapter of the Vaidanta) :

“নহানতোপি পরসোভয় লিঙ্গং সৰ্বত্র হি।”

“That being, which is distinct from matter, and from those which are contained in matter, is not various, because he is declared by all the Vaidas to be one beyond description.”

And again, “The Vaida has declared the Supreme Being to be mere understanding.” Moreover, if we look at the conduct of the ancient true believers in God, as Janaca, the celebrated prince of Mithila, Vashisht’ha, Shanaca, Vyasa, Shancaracharyu, and others whose characters as believers in one God are well known to the public by their doctrines and works, which are still in circulation, we shall find that these teachers, although they declared their faith in the omnipresent God according to the doctrines of the Vaidanta, assigned to every creature the particular character and respect he was entitled to. It is, however, extremely remarkable, that the very argument which they employ to shew the impossibility of practical conformity to faith in the omnipresence of God, may be alleged against every system of their own idolatry; for the believers in the godhead of Crishna, and the devotees of Calee, as well as the followers of Shiva, believe firmly in the omnipresence of Chrishna, Calee, and Shiva, respectively. The authorities, then, for the worship of those gods, in declaring their omnipresence, would according to their own argument, enjoin the worship of every creature as much as of those supposed divinities. Omnipresence, however, is an attribute much more consonant with the idea of a Supreme Being than with that of any fictitious figure to which they pay divine honours ! Another argument is, that “No man can have, as it is said by the Shastra, a desire of knowledge respecting the Supreme Being, unless his mind be purified ; and as idol worship purifies men’s minds, it should be therefore attended to.” I admit the truth of the first part of this argument, as a desire of the acquisition of a knowledge of

God is an indication of an improved mind ; consequently whenever we see a person possessed of that desire, we should attribute it to some degree of purification ; but I must affirm with the Vaidas, that purity of mind is the consequence of divine worship, and not of any superstitious practices.

The Vrihadaranyaca says,

“ Adore God alone.” Again; “ Nothing excepting the Supreme Being should be adored by wise men.”

“ God alone rules the mind, and relieves it from impurity.”

The last of the principal arguments which are alleged in favour of idolatry is, that it is established by custom. “ Let the authors of the Vaidas, Pooranas, and Tantras,” it is said, “ assert what they may in favour of devotion to the Supreme Being, but idol worship has been practised for so many centuries that custom renders it proper to continue that worship.” It is however evident to every one possessed of common sense, that custom or fashion is quite different from divine faith ; the latter proceeding from spiritual authorities and correct reasoning, and the former being merely the fruit of vulgar caprice.

What can justify a man, who believes in the inspiration of his religious books, in neglecting the direct authorities of the same works, and subjecting himself entirely to custom and fashion, which are liable to perpetual changes and depend upon popular whim ? But it cannot be passed unnoticed that those who practise idolatry and defend it under the shield of custom, have been violating their customs almost every twenty years, for the sake of a little convenience, or to promote their worldly advantage : a few instances which are most commonly and publicly practised, I beg leave to state here.

1st. The whole community in Bengal, with very few exceptions, have, since the middle of last century, forsaken their ancient modes of the performance of ceremonial rites of religion, and followed the precepts of the late Raghunandana, and consequently differ in the most essential points of ceremonies from the natives of Behar, Tirhoot, and Benares. 2d. The system of their subdivision in each cast with the modes of marriage and intermarriage, is also a modern introduction altogether contrary to their law and ancient customs. 3d.

The profession of instructing European gentlemen in the Vaidas, Smriti and Puranas, is a violation of their long established custom ; and, 4th The supplying their European guests with wine and victuals in presence of their gods and goddesses is also a direct breach of custom and law. I may conclude this subject with an appeal to the good sense of my countrymen, by asking them, “ whose advice “ appears the most disinterested and most rational—that “ of those who, concealing your scriptures from you, continually teach you thus,” “ Believe whatever we may say— “ don’t examine or even touch your scriptures, neglect entirely your reasoning faculties—do not only consider us, , whatever may be our principles, as gods on earth, but “ humbly adore and propitiate us by sacrificing to us the “ greater part (if not the whole) of your property :” “ or “ that of the man who lays your scriptures and their comments as well as their translations before you, and solicits “ you to examine their purport, without neglecting the “ proper and moderate use of reason ; and to attend strictly “ to their directions, by the rational performance of your “ duty to your sole Creator, and to your fellow creatures, “ and also to pay true respect to those who think and act “ righteously.” I hope no one can be so prejudiced as to be unable to discern which advice is most calculated to lead him to the best road to both temporal and eternal happiness.

A DEFENCE
OF
HINDOO THEISM,

IN REPLY TO THE
ATTACK OF AN ADVOCATE FOR IDOLATRY
AT MADRAS.

BY
RAJAH RAMMOHUN ROY.

CALCUTTA:
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BEFORE I attempt to reply to the observations that the learned gentleman, who signs himself Shunkara Shastri, has offered in his letter of the 20th December last, addressed to the Editor of the Madras Courier, on the subject of an article published in the Calcutta Gazette, and on my translation of an abridgement of the Vaidanta and of the two chapters of the Vaidas ; I beg to be allowed to express the disappointment I have felt, in receiving from a learned Brahmun controversial remarks on Hindoo Theology, written in a foreign language ; as it is the invariable practice of the natives of all provinces of Hindoosthan to hold their discussions on such subjects in Sangscrita, which is the learned language common to all of them, and in which they may naturally be expected to convey their ideas with perfect correctness, and greater facility than in any foreign tongue : nor need it be alleged that, by adopting this established channel of controversy, the opportunity of appealing to public opinion on the subject must be lost ; as a subsequent translation from the Sangscrita into English may sufficiently serve that purpose. The irregularity of this mode of proceeding, however, gives me room to suspect that the letter in question is the production of the pen of an English gentleman, whose liberality, I suppose, has induced him to attempt an apology, even for the absurd idolatry of his fellow-creatures. If this inference be correct, while I congratulate that gentleman on his progress in a knowledge of the sublime doctrine of the Vaidanta, I must, at the same time, take the liberty of entreating that he will, for the future, prefer consulting the original works written upon those doctrines, to relying on the second-hand

information on the subject, that may be offered him by any person whatsoever.

The learned gentleman commences by objecting to the terms discoverer and reformer, in which the Editor of the Calcutta Gazette was pleased to make mention of me. He states, that "people of limited understanding, not being able
"to comprehend the system of worshipping the invisible
"Being, have adopted false doctrines, and by that means
"confounded weak minds in remote times ; but due punish-
"ment was inflicted on those heretics, and religion was very
"well established throughout India by the Reverend Shan-
"karacharya and his disciples ; who, however, did not
"pretend to reform or discover them, or assume the title of
"a reformer or discoverer." In none of my writings, nor in any verbal discussion, have I ever pretended to reform or to discover the doctrines of the unity of God, nor have I ever assumed the title of reformer or discoverer : as far from such an assumption, I have urged in every work that I have hitherto published, that the doctrines of the unity of God are real Hindooism, as that religion was practised by our ancestors, and as it is well known even at the present age to many learned Brahmuns : I beg to repeat a few of the passages to which I allude-

In the introduction to the abridgment of the Vaidanta I have said : "In order, therefore, to vindicate my own faith
"and that of our forefathers, I have been endeavouring, for
"some time past, to convince my countrymen of the true
"meaning of our sacred books ; and prove that my aberration
"deserves not the opprobrium, which some unreflecting per-
"sons have been so ready to throw upon me." In another place of the same introduction : "The present is an endea-
"vour to render an abridgment of the same (the Vaidanta)
"into English ; by which I expect to prove to my European
"friends, that the superstitious practices which deform the
"Hindoo religion, have nothing to do with the pure spirit of
"its dictates." In the introduction of the Kainopanishada :
"This work will, I trust, by explaining to my countrymen
"the real spirit of the Hindoo scriptures, which is but the
"declaration of the unity of God, tend in a great degree to
"correct the erroneous conceptions which have prevailed

“ with regard to the doctrines they inculcate ;” and in the Preface of the Ishopanishada : “ many learned Brahmuns “ are perfectly aware of the absurdity of idol worship, and “ are well informed of the nature of the pure mode of divine “ worship.” A reconsideration of these passages will, I hope, convince the learned gentleman, that I never advanced any claim to the title either of a reformer, or of a discoverer of the doctrines of the unity of the Godhead. It is not at all impossible that from the perusal of the translation above alluded to, the Editor of the Calcutta Gazette, finding the system of idolatry into which Hindoos are now completely sunk, quite inconsistent with the real spirit of their scriptures, may have imagined that their contents had become entirely forgotten and unknown ; and that I was the first to point out the absurdity of idol worship, and to inculcate the propriety of the pure divine worship, ordained by their Vaidas, their Smritis, and their Pooranas. From this idea, and from finding in his intercourse with other Hindoos, that I was stigmatized by many, however unjustly, as an innovator, he may have been, not unnaturally, misled to apply to me the epithets of discoverer and reformer.

2dly The learned gentleman states : “ There are an immense “ number of books, namely, Vaidas, Shastras, Pooranas, Agamas, “ Tantras, Sutras, and Itihas, besides numerous commentaries “ compiled by many famous theologians, both of ancient and “ modern times, respecting the doctrines of the worship of “ the invisible Being. They are not only written in Sang- “ scrita, but rendered into the Pracreta, Tenua, Tamol, “ Gujrate, Hindoosthani, Marhutta, and Canari languages, and “ immemorially studied by a great part of the Hindoo nation, “ attached to the adwaitum faith, &c.” This statement of the learned gentleman, as far as it is correct, corroborates indeed my assertion with respect to the doctrines of the worship of the invisible Supreme Spirit being unanimously inculcated by all the Hindoo Shastras, and naturally leads to severe reflections on the selfishness which must actuate those Brahmuncial teachers who, notwithstanding the unanimous authority of the Shastras for the adoption of pure worship, yet, with the view of maintaining the title of God, which they arrogate to themselves, and of deriving pecuniary and other

advantages from the numerous rites and festivals of idol worship, constantly advance and encourage idolatry to the utmost of their power. I must remark, however, that there is no translation of the Vaidas into any of the modern languages of Hindoosthan with which I am acquainted, and it is for that reason that I have translated into Bengali the Vaidanta, the Kainopanishada of the Sama Vaida, Ishopanishada of the Yojur Vaida, &c, with the contents of which none but the learned among my countrymen were at all acquainted.

The learned gentleman states that the translations of the scripture into the vulgar language are rejected by some people ; and he assigns as reasons for their so doing, that " if the reader of them doubts the truth of the principles " explained in the translation, the divine knowledge he " acquired by them becomes a doubtful faith, and that doubt " cannot be removed unless he compare them with the " original work : in that case, the knowledge he lastly ac- " quired becomes superior, and his study, in the first instance " becomes useless, and the cause of repeating the same work." When a translation of a work written in a foreign tongue is made by a person at all acquainted with that language into his native tongue, and the same translation is sanctioned and approved of by many natives of the same country, who are perfectly conversant with that foreign language, the translation, I presume, may be received with confidence, as a satisfactory interpretation of the original work, both by the vulgar and by men of literature.

It must not be supposed, however, that I am inclined to assert that there is not the least room to doubt the accuracy of such a translation ; because the meaning of authors, even in the original works, is very frequently dubious, especially in a language like Sungscrita, every sentence of which, almost, admits of being explained in different senses. But should the possibility of errors in every translation be admitted as reason for withholding all confidence in their contents, such a rule would shake our belief, not only in the principles explained in the translation of the Vaidanta into the current language, but also in all information respecting foreign history and theology obtained by means of translations : in that case, we must either learn all the languages that are

spoken by the different nations in the world, to acquire a knowledge of their histories and religions, or be content to know nothing of any country besides our own. 'The second reason which the learned gentleman assigns for their objection to the translation is, that "Reading the scripture in the "vulgar languages is prohibited by the Pooranas." I have not yet met with any texts of any Pooranas which prohibit the explanation of the scriptures in the vulgar tongue ; on the contrary, the Pooranas allow that practice very frequently. I repeat one of these declarations from the Shiva Dhurma, quoted by the great Rughunundana. "He who can interpret, according to the ratio of the understanding of his pupils, through "Sungscrita, or through the vulgar languages, or by means "of the current language of the country, is entitled spiritual "father." Moreover, in every part of Hindoostan all professors of the Sungscrita language instructing beginners in the Vaidas, Pooranas, and in other shastras, interpret them in the vulgar languages ; especially spiritual fathers in exposition of those parts of the Vaidas and Pooranas, which allegorically introduce a plurality of gods and idol-worship ; doctrines which tend so much to their own worldly advantage.

The learned gentleman states, that "The first of the "Vaidas prescribes the mode of performing yagam or sacrifice, bestowing daneem or alms ; treats of penance, fasting, "and of worshipping the incarnations, in which the Supreme "Deity has appeared on the earth for divine purposes. The "ceremonies performed according to these modes, forsaking "their fruits, are affirmed by the Vaidas to be mental exercises and mental purifications necessary to obtain the knowledge of the divine nature." I, in common with the Vaidas and the Vaidanta, and Munoo (the first and best of Hindoo lawgivers) as well as with the most celebrated Shancharacharya, deny these ceremonies being necessary to obtain the knowledge of the divine nature ; as the Vaidanta positively declares, in text 36, sec, 4th, chapt. 2d :

অন্তরা চাপি তু তদৃষে : ॥

বেদান্তসূত্রং ॥

"Man may acquire the true knowledge of God, even "without observing the rules and rites prescribed by the

“ Vaidas for each class ; as it is found in the Vaidas that many “ persons who neglected the performance of the rites and “ ceremonies, owing to their perpetual attention to the “ adoration of the Supreme Being, acquired the true know- “ ledge respecting the Supreme Spirit.” The Vaidas says : “ Many learned true believers never worshipped fire, or “ any celestial gods through fire.” And also the Vaidānta asserts, in the 1st text of 3d sec. of the 3d chapter. :

সর্ববেদান্তপ্রত্যয়ং চোদনাদ্যবিশেষাৎ ॥

বেদান্তসূত্রং ॥

“ The worship authorized by all the Vaidas is one, as the “ directions for the worship of the only Supreme Being are “ invariably found in the Vaidas, and the epithets of the “ Supreme and Omnipresent Being, &c. commonly imply God alone.”

Munoo, as I have elsewhere quoted, thus declares on the same point, chap. 12th, text 92d :

যথোক্তান্যপি কৰ্ম্মাণি পরিহায় দ্বিজোত্তমঃ ।

আত্মজ্ঞানে শমে চ স্যাৎসেদাভ্যাসে চ যত্নবান্ ॥

মনুঃ ॥

“ Thus must the chief of the twice born, though he neg- “ lect the ceremonial rites mentioned in the Shastra, be dili- “ gent in attaining a knowledge of God, in controlling his “ organs of sense, and in repeating the Vaidas.”

Again, chapter 4th, text 23d :

বাচ্যেকে জুহুতি প্রাণান্ প্রাণে বাচঞ্চ সৰ্বদা ।

বাচি প্রাণে চ পশ্যন্তোষজনির্ভূতিমক্ষয়াৎ ॥

মনুঃ ॥

“ Some constantly sacrifice their breath in their speech, “ when they instruct others of God aloud, and their speech “ in their breath, when they meditate in silence ; perceiving “ in their speech and breath thus employed the imperishable “ fruit of a sacrificial offering.”

Text 24th.

জ্ঞানেনৈবাপরে বিপ্রায়জন্ত্যেতৈর্মথৈঃ সদা ।

জ্ঞানমূল্যাং ক্রিয়ামেষাং পশ্যন্তোজ্ঞানচক্ষুষা ॥

মনুঃ ॥

“ Other Brahmuns incessantly perform those sacrifices

“only; seeing with the eye of divine learning, that the
“scriptural knowledge is the root of every ceremonial
“observance.”

And also the same author declares in the chap. 2d, text 84:

করন্তি সৰ্ববৈদিকো জুহোতি যজতি ত্রিয়া ।

অকরন্তু করং জেয়ং ব্রহ্ম চৈব প্রজাপতিঃ ॥

মনুঃ ॥

“All rites ordained in the Vaida, oblations to fire and
“solemn sacrifices, pass away ; but that which passes not
“away is declared to be the syllable Om, thence called
“Acshora ; since it is a symbol of God, the Lord of created
“beings.”

The learned gentleman states, that “the difficulty of
“attaining a knowledge of the Invisible and Almighty
“Spirit is evident from the preceding verses.” I agree
with him in that point ; that the attainment of perfect
knowledge of the nature of the Godhead is certainly difficult,
or rather impossible ; but to read the existence of the Al-
mighty Being in his works of nature, is not, I will dare to
say, so difficult to the mind of a man possessed of common
sense, and unfettered by prejudice, as to conceive artificial
images to be possessed, at once, of the opposite natures of
human and divine beings, which idolaters constantly ascribe
to their idols ;—strangely believing that things so constructed
can be converted by ceremonies into constructors of the
universe.

The learned gentleman objects to our introducing songs,
although expressing only the peculiar tenets of monotheism,
and says :

“But the holding of meetings, playing music, singing
“songs, and dancing, which are ranked among carnal plea-
“sures, are not ordained by scripture as mental purification.”
The practice of dancing in divine worship, I agree, is not
ordained by the scripture, and accordingly never was intro-
duced in our worship ; any mention of dancing in the Cal-
cutta Gazette must, therefore, have proceeded from misinfor-
mation of the Editor. But respecting the propriety of
introducing monotheistical songs in the divine worship, I
beg leave to refer the gentleman to the text 114th and 115th

of the 3d chapter of Yagnyavalca, who authorizes not only scriptural music in divine contemplation, but also the songs that are composed by the vulgar. It is also evident that any interesting idea is calculated to make more impression upon the mind, when conveyed in musical verses, than when delivered in the form of common conversation.

The learned gentleman says : " All the Brahmuns in this peninsula are studying the same vaidom as are read in the other parts of the country ; but I do not recollect to have read or heard of one treating on astronomy, medicine, or arms : the first is indeed an ongam of the Vaidam, but the two latter are taught in separate Shastras." In answer to which I beg to be allowed to refer the gentleman to the following text of the Nervana : " The Vaidas, while talking of planets, botany, austere duties, arms, rites, natural consequences, and several other subjects, are purified by the inculcation of the doctrines of the Supreme Spirit." And also to the latter end of the Mahanervana agama.

From the perusal of these texts, I trust, he will be convinced that Vaidas not only treat of astronomy, medicine, and arms, but also of morality and natural philosophy, and that all arts and sciences that are treated of in other Shastras, were originally introduced by the Vaidas : see also Munoo, chapter 12, verses 97 and 98. I cannot of course be expected to be answerable for Brahmuns neglecting entirely the study of the scientific parts of the Vaida, and putting in practice, and promulgating to the utmost of their power, that part of them which, treating of rites and festivals, is justly considered as the source of their worldly advantages and support of their alleged divinity.

I observe, that on the following statement in my Introduction to the Cainopunisheda, viz, "should this explanation given by the Vaida itself, as well as by its celebrated commentator Vyasa, not be allowed to reconcile these passages which are seemingly at variance with each other, as those that declare the unity of the invisible Supreme Being, with others which describe a plurality of independent visible gods, the whole work must, I am afraid, not only be stripped of its authority, but looked upon as altogether unintelligible," the learned gentleman has remarked

that “ To say the least of this passage, RAM MOHUN ROY “ appears quite as willing to abandon as to defend the Scripture of his Religion.”

In the foregoing paragraph, however, I did no more than logically confine the case to two points, viz., that the explanation of the Vaidā and of its commentators must either be admitted as sufficiently reconciling the apparent contradictions between different passages of the Vaidā, or must not be admitted. In the latter case, the Vaidā must necessarily be supposed to be inconsistent with itself, and therefore altogether unintelligible, which is directly contrary to the faith of Hindoos of every description ; consequently they must admit that those explanations do sufficiently reconcile the seeming contradictions between the chapters of the Vaidas.

The learned gentleman says that “ Their (the attributes’ “ and incarnations,) worship under various representations, “ by means of consecrated objects, is prescribed by the scripture to the human race, by way of mental exercises,” &c. I cannot admit that the worship of these attributes under various representations, by means of consecrated objects, has been prescribed by the Vaidā to the HUMAN RACE ; as this kind of worship of consecrated objects is enjoined by the Shastra to those only who are incapable of raising their minds to the notion of an invisible Supreme Being. I have quoted several authorities for this assertion in my Preface to the Ishopanishada, and beg to repeat here one or two of them :

অস্তু দেবামনুষ্যাণাং দিবি দেবামনীষিণাং ।

কাষ্ঠলোক্তেষু মূৰ্থাণাং যুক্তস্যান্নিদেবতা ॥

শাতাতপবচনং ॥

“ The vulgar look for their God in water ; men of more “ extended knowledge in celestial bodies ; the ignorant in “ wood, bricks, and stones ; but learned men in the universal “ soul,”

এবজ্ঞানানুসারেণ রূপাণি বিবিধানি চ ।

কল্পিতানি হিতার্থায় ভক্তানামম্প্রমেধমাং ॥

মহানির্ঝাণং ॥

“ Thus corresponding to the nature of different powers or

"qualities, numerous figures have been invented for the benefit of those who are not possessed of sufficient understanding"

Permit me in this instance to ask, whether every Musulman in Turkey and Arabia, from the highest to the lowest, every Protestant Christian at least of Europe, and many followers of Cabeer and Nanuck, do worship God without the assistance of consecrated objects ? If so, how can we suppose that the human race is not capable of adoring the Supreme Being without the puerile practice of having recourse to visible objects ?

The learned gentleman is of opinion that the attributes of God exist distinctly from God ; and he compares the relation between God and these attributes to that of a king to his ministers, as he says : " If a person be desirous to visit an earthly prince, he ought to be introduced in the first instance by his ministers," &c. ; and "in like manner the Grace of God ought to be obtained by the grace through the worship of his attributes." This opinion, I am extremely sorry to find, is directly contrary to all the Vaidānta doctrines interpreted to us by the most revered Shankaracharya, which are real adwaita or non-duality ; they affirm that God has no second that may be possessed of eternal existence, either of the same nature with himself, or of a different nature from him, nor any second of that nature that might be called either his part or his quality. The 16th text of the 2d section of 3d chap. :

আহ চ তন্মাত্রং ॥

বেদান্তসূত্রং ॥

" The Vaida has declared the Supreme Being to be mere understanding."

The Vaida says :

সত্যং জ্ঞানমনন্তং ব্রহ্ম ॥

শ্রুতিঃ ॥

" God is real existence, wisdom and eternity."

The Vaida very often calls the Supreme Existence by the epithets of Existent, Wise, and Eternal ; and assigns as the reason for adopting such epithets, that the Vaida in the first instance speaks of God according to human idea, which views

quality separately from person, in order to facilitate our comprehension of objects. In case these attributes should be supposed, as the learned gentleman asserts, to be separate existences, it necessarily follows, that they must be either eternal or non-eternal. The former case, viz. the existence of a plurality of beings imbued like God himself with the property of eternal duration, strikes immediately at the root of all the doctrines relative to the unity of the Supreme Being contained in the Vaidanta. By the latter sentiment, namely, that the power and attributes of God are not eternal, we are led at once into the belief that the nature of God is susceptible of change, and consequently that He is not eternal, which makes no inconsiderable step towards atheism itself. These are the obvious and dangerous consequences, resulting from the learned gentleman's doctrines, that the attributes of the Supreme Being are distinct existences. I am quite at a loss to know how these attributes of the pure and perfect Supreme Being (as the learned gentleman declares them to exist really and separately, and not fictitiously and allegorically,) can be so sensual and destitute of morality, as the creating attribute or Brahma is said to be, by the Pooranas; which represent him in one instance as attempting to commit a rape upon his own daughter. The protecting attribute, or Vishnu, is in another place affirmed to have fraudulently violated the chastity of Brinda in order to kill her husband. Shiva, the destroying attribute, is said to have had a criminal attachment to Mohinee, disregarding all ideas of decency. And a thousand similar examples must be familiar to every reader of the Pooranas. I should be obliged by the learned gentleman's shewing how the contemplation of such circumstances, which are constantly related by the worshippers of these attributes, even in their sermons, can be instrumental towards the purification of the mind, conducive to morality, and productive of eternal beatitude. Besides, though the learned gentleman in this instance considers these attributes to be separate existences, yet in another place he seems to view them as parts of the Supreme Being, as he says: "If one part of the ocean be adored, the ocean is adored." I am somewhat at a loss to understand how the learned gentleman proposes to reconcile

this apparent contradiction. I must observe, however, in this place, that the comparison drawn between the relation of God and those attributes, and that of a king and his ministers, is totally inconsistent with the faith entertained by Hindoos of the present day; who, so far from considering these objects of worship as mere instruments by which they may arrive at the power of contemplating the God of Nature, regard them in the light of independent gods, to each of whom, however absurdly, they attribute almighty power, and a claim to worship, solely on his own account.

The learned gentleman is dissatisfied with the objection mentioned in my translation to worshipping these fictitious representations, and remarks that "the objections to worshipping the attributes are not satisfactorily stated by the author." I consequently repeat the following authorities, which I hope may answer my purpose. The following are the declarations of the Vaidā :

যোহন্যাং দেবতামুপাস্তে অন্যোহসাবন্যোহমস্মীতি ন
স বেদ যথা পশুরেব স দেবানাং ॥

বৃহদারণ্যকশ্রুতিঃ ॥

"He, who worships any god excepting the Supreme Being, and thinks that he himself is distinct and inferior to that God, knows nothing, and is considered as a domestic beast of these gods."

"A state even so high as that of Brahma does not afford real bliss."

আত্মতোষোপাসীত ॥

শ্রুতিঃ ॥

"Adore God alone."

"None but the Supreme Being is to be worshipped; nothing excepting him should be adored by a wise man." I repeat also the following texts of the Vaidānta Durshuna :

ভাক্তং বাহনাত্মবিজ্ঞাত্বা হি দর্শয়তি ॥

বেদান্তসূত্রং ॥

"The declaration of the Vaidā, that those that worship the celestial gods are the food of such gods, is an allegorical expression, and only means, that they are comforts to the

“ celestial gods as food to mankind; for he who has no faith
 “ in the Supreme Being is rendered subject to these gods.
 “ The Vaidā affirms the same.”

And the revered Shunkaracharya has frequently declared the state of celestial gods to be that of demons in the Bhasya of the Ishopanishada and of others.

To these authorities a thousand others might be added. But should the learned gentleman require some practical grounds for objecting to the idolatrous worship of the Hindoos, I can be at no loss to give him numberless instances, where the ceremonies that have been instituted under the pretext of honouring the all-perfect Author of Nature, are of a tendency utterly subversive of every moral principle.

I begin with Krishna as the most adored of all the incarnations, the number of whose devotees is exceedingly great. His worship is made to consist in the institution of his image or picture, accompanied by one or more females, and in the contemplation of his history and behaviour, such as his perpetration of murder upon a female of the name of Pootana ; his compelling great number of married and unmarried women to stand before him denuded ; his debauching them and several others, to the mortal affliction of their husbands and relations ; his annoying them, by violating the laws of cleanliness and other facts of the same nature. The grossness of his worship does not find a limit here. His devotees very often personify (in the same manner as European actors upon stages do) him and his female companions, dancing with indecent gestures, and singing songs relative to his love and debaucheries. It is impossible to explain in language fit to meet the public eye, the mode in which Muhadava, or the destroying attribute, is worshipped by the generality of the Hindoos : suffice it to say, that it is altogether congenial with the indecent nature of the image, under whose form he is most commonly adored.

The stories respecting him, which are read by his devotees in the Tuntras, are of a nature that, if told of any man, would be offensive to the ears of the most abandoned of either sex. In the worship of Kalee, human sacrifices, the use of wine, criminal intercourse, and licentious songs, are included : the first of these practices has become generally extinct ; but it

is believed that there are parts of the country where human victims are still offered.

Debauchery, however, universally forms the principal part of the worship of her followers. Nigam and other Tantras may satisfy every reader of the horrible tenets of the worshippers of the two latter deities. The modes of worship of almost all the inferior deities are pretty much the same. Having so far explained the nature of worship adopted by Hindoos in general, for the propitiation of their allegorical attributes, in direct opposition to the mode of pure divine worship inculcated by the Vaidas, I cannot but entertain a strong hope that the learned gentleman, who ranks even monotheistical songs among carnal pleasures, and consequently rejects their admittance in worship, will no longer stand forward as an advocate for the worship of separate and independent attributes and incarnations.

The learned gentleman says, "that the Saviour," meaning Christ, "should be considered a personification of the mercy and kindness of God (I mean actual not allegorical personification)." From the little knowledge I had acquired of the tenets of Christians and those of anti-Christians, I thought there were only three prevailing opinions respecting the nature of Christ; viz. that he was considered by some as the expounder of the laws of God, and the mediator between God and man; by many to be one of the three mysterious persons of the Godhead; whilst others, such as the Jews, say that he was a mere man. But to consider Christ as a personification of the mercy of God is, if I mistake not, a new doctrine in Christianity, the discussion of which, however, has no connexion with the present subject. I however must observe that this opinion which the learned gentleman has formed of Christ being a personification of the mercy of God, is similar to that entertained by Mussulmans, for a period of upwards of a thousand years, respecting Mohumud, whom they call mercy of God upon all his creatures. The learned gentleman in the conclusion of his observations has left, as he says, the doctrines of pure allegory to me. It would have been more consistent with justice had he left pure allegory also to the Vaidas, which declare, "appellations and figures of all kinds are innovations," and which

have allegorically represented God in the figure of the universe : " Fire is his head, the sun and the moon are his two " eyes," &c. ; and which have also represented all human internal qualities by different earthly objects ; and also to Vyas, who has strictly followed the Vaidas in these figurative representations, and to Shankaracharya, who also adopted the mode of allegory, in his Bhashya of the Vaidanta and of the Oupanishadas.



A

SECOND DEFENCE

OF

The Monotheistical System

OF

THE VAIDAS;

IN REPLY TO

AN APOLOGY FOR THE PRESENT STATE

OF

HINDOO WORSHIP.

BY

RAJAH RAMMOHUN ROY.

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The most learned Vyasa shows, in his work of the Vaidanta, that all the texts of the Vaidas, with one consent, prove but the Divinity of that Being, who is out of the reach of comprehension and beyond all description. For the use of the public, I have made a concise translation of that celebrated work into Bengalee, and the present is an endeavour to translate the principal Chapters of the Vaidas, in conformity to the Comments of the great Shanker-Acharya. The translation of the Ishopanishad belonging to the Yajur, the second division of the Vaidas, being already completed, I have put it into the press ; and the others will successively be printed, as soon as their translation is completed. It is evident, from those authorities, that the sole regulator of the Universe is but one, who is omnipresent, far surpassing our powers of comprehension ; above external sense ; and whose worship is the chief duty of mankind and the sole cause of eternal beatitude ; and that all that bear figure and appellation are inventions. Should it be asked, whether the assertions found in the Puranas and Tantras, &c. respecting the worship of the several gods and goddesses, are false, or whether Puranas and Tantras are not included in the Shastra, the answer is this :—The Purana and Tantra, &c. are of course to be considered as Shastra, for they repeatedly declare God to be one and above the apprehension of external and internal senses ; they indeed expressly declare the divinity of many gods and goddesses, and the modes of their worship ; but they reconcile those contradictory assertions by affirming frequently, that the directions to worship any figured beings are only applicable to those, who are

incapable of elevating their minds to the idea of an invisible Supreme Being, in order that such persons, by fixing their attention on those invented figures, may be able to restrain themselves from vicious temptations, and that those that are competent for the worship of the invisible God, should disregard the worship of Idols. I repeat a few of these declarations as follows. The authority of Yamadagni is thus quoted by the great Raghunandana :

“ চিন্ময়সাদ্বিতীয়স্য নিষ্কলস্যশরীরিণঃ ।

উপাসকানাং কার্যার্থং ব্রহ্মণোরূপকল্পনা ॥

রূপস্থানাং দেবতানাং পুংস্ত্র্যাং শাদিককল্পনা । ”

যমদগ্নিস্মৃতিঃ ॥

“ For the benefit of those who are inclined to worship, figures are invented to serve as representations of God, who is merely understanding, and has no second, no parts nor figure ; consequently, to these representatives, either male or female forms and other circumstances are fictitiously assigned.”

In the second Chapter of the first part of the Vishnu Purana it is said ;

“ রূপনামাদিনির্দেশবিশেষণবিবর্জিতঃ ।

অপক্ষয়বিনাশাভ্যাং পরিণামান্তিজন্যভিঃ ।

বর্জিতঃশক্যতে বক্তুং যঃ সদাস্তীতি কেবলং ॥ ”

বিস্কপুরাণং ॥

“ God is without figure, epithet, definition or description. He is without defect, not liable to annihilation, change, pain or birth ; we can only say, that he who is the eternal being, is God.”

“ অস্পৃদেবায়নুঘ্যাণাং দিবিদেবায়নীরিণাং ।

কাষ্ঠলোষ্ট্রেষু মূর্তানাং যুক্তস্যাত্মনি দেবতা ॥ ”

শাতাতপবচনং ॥

“ The vulgar look for their gods in water ; men of more extended knowledge in celestial bodies ; the ignorant in wood, bricks, and stones ; but learned men in the universal soul.”

In the 84th Chapter of the tenth division of the Sri-Bhagavata, Chrishna says to Vyas and others :

“ কিং স্বপ্নাপতপসাং নৃণামর্চয়াং দেবচক্ষুষাং ।

দর্শনসপর্ণনপ্রশ্নপ্রস্রপাদার্চনাদিকং ॥ ”

ভাগবতং ॥

“ It is impossible for those who consider pilgrimage as devotion, and believe that the divine nature exists in the image, to look up to, communicate with, to petition and to revere true believers in God.”

“ যস্যাত্মবুদ্ধিঃ কুণপে ত্রিধাতুকে স্বধীঃ কলত্রাদিষু ভৌমইজ্যধীঃ ।

যত্তীর্থবুদ্ধিঃ সলিলে ন কহিচিৎ জনৈষ্যভিজ্জেষু সএব গোথরঃ ॥ ”

ভাগবতং ॥

“ He who views as the soul this body formed of phlegm, wind and bile, or regards only wife, children, and relations as himself (that is, he who neglects to contemplate the nature of the soul), he who attributes a divine nature to earthen images, and believes in the holiness of water, yet pays not such respect to those who are endowed with a knowledge of God, is as an ass amongst cows.”

In the 9th Chapter of the Cularnava it is written :

“ বিদিতে তু পরে তন্নে বর্ণাভীতে হবিক্রিয়ে ।

কিঙ্করস্তং হি গচ্ছন্তি মদ্রামদ্রাধিপৈঃসহ ॥ ”

কুলার্ণবঃ ॥

“ A knowledge of the Supreme Being, who is beyond the power of expression and unchangeable, being acquired, all gods and goddesses, and their texts which represent them, shall become slaves.”

“ পরে ব্রহ্মণি বিজাতে সমস্তৈর্নিয়মৈরলং ।

তালবৃন্তেন কিং কার্যং লন্ধে মলয়মাক্রতে ॥ ”

কুলার্ণবঃ ॥

“ After a knowledge of the Supreme Being has been attained, there is no need to attend to ceremonies prescribed by Shastras—no want of a fan should be felt, when a soft southern wind is found to refresh.”

The Mahanirvana says,

“ এবং গুণানুসারেণ রূপাণি বিবিধানি চ ।

কল্পিতানি হিতার্থায় ভক্তানাম্প্রসেধসাং ॥ ”

মহানির্বাণং ॥

“ Thus corresponding to the natures of different powers or qualities, numerous figures have been invented for the benefit of those who are not possessed of sufficient understanding.”

From the foregoing quotations it is evident, that though the Vaidas, Puranas, and Tantras, frequently assert the existence of the plurality of gods and goddesses, and prescribe the modes of their worship for men of insufficient understanding, yet they have also declared in a hundred other places, that these passages are to be taken merely in a figurative sense.

It cannot be alleged in support of Idolatry, that “ although a knowledge of God is certainly above all things, still as it is impossible to acquire that knowledge, men should of course worship figured Gods ;” for, had it been impossible to attain a knowledge of the Supreme Being, the Vaidas and Purans, as well as Tantras, would not have instructed mankind to aim at such attainment ; as it is not to be supposed that directions to acquire what is obviously unattainable could be given by the Shastras, or even by a man of common sense. Should the Idolater say, “ that the acquisition of a knowledge of God, although it is not impossible, is most difficult of comprehension,” I will agree with him in that point ; but infer from it, that we ought, therefore, the more to exert ourselves to acquire that knowledge ; but I highly lament to observe, that so far from endeavouring to make such an acquisition, the very proposal frequently excites his anger and displeasure.

Neither can it be alleged that the Vaidas, Puranas, &c. teach both the adoration of the Supreme Being and that of celestial gods and goddesses, but that the former is intended for Yatis,

remarked : “ For they (the Pooranas, Tuntras, &c.) repeatedly declare God to be one, and above the apprehension of the external and internal senses. They indeed expressly declare the divinity of many gods, and the mode of their worship ; but they reconcile those contradicting assertions by affirming frequently, that the directions to worship any celestial beings are only applicable to those who are incapable of elevating their minds to the idea of an invisible being.” And, with the view to remove every doubt as to the correctness of my assertion, I at the same time quoted the most unquestionable authorities, a few of which I shall here repeat.

এবঙ্গুণানুসারেণ রূপাণি বিবিধানি চ ।

কল্পিতানি হিতার্থায় ভক্তানামম্প্রমেধসা ৭ ॥

মহানির্দ্বীগ ৭ ॥

“ Thus corresponding to the natures of different powers and qualities, numerous figures have been invented for the benefit of those who are not possessed of sufficient understanding.”

অস্তু দেবামনুষ্যাণাং দিবি দেবামনীষিণাং ।

কাষ্ঠলৌকৈষু মূৰ্থাণাং যুক্তস্বাত্মনি দেবতা ॥

শাতাতপ বচনং ॥

“ The vulgar look for their gods in water ; men of more extended knowledge in celestial bodies ; the ignorant, in wood, bricks, and stones ; but learned men in the universal soul.”

কিংস্বপ্নতপসাং নৃণামর্চয়াং দেবচক্ষুষাং ।

দর্শনস্পর্শনপ্রশ্নপ্রশ্রুতাদর্শনাদিকং ৭ ॥

শ্রীমদ্ভাগবতং ৭ ॥

“ It is impossible for those who consider pilgrimage as devotion, and believe that the divine nature exists in the image, to look up to, communicate with, to petition, and to serve true believers in God.”

Such indeed is the prevalent nature of truth, that when to dispute it is impossible, the learned Brahmun has not been always successful in concealing it, even when the admission is most fatal to his own argument. In p. 28, l. 34,

he says : “ But to those it is enjoined who, from a defective “ understanding, do not perceive that God exists in every “ thing, that they should worship him through the medium “ of some created object.” In making this acknowledgment, the learned Brahmun has confirmed the correctness of all my assertions ; though the evident conclusion is, that he and all his followers must either immediately give up all pretensions to understanding, or forsake idolatry.

In my former tract, I not only proved that the adoration of the Supreme Being in spirit was prescribed by the Vaida to men of understanding, and the worship of the celestial bodies and their images to ignorant, but I also asserted, that the Vaida actually prohibited the worship of any kind of figured beings by men of intellect and education. A few of the passages quoted by me in my former publications, on which this assertion rests, I also beg leave to repeat.

যোহন্যাং দেবতামুপাস্তে অন্যোহসাবন্যোহমস্মীতি

ন স বেদ যথা পশুরেব স দেবানাং ॥

বৃহদারণ্যকশ্রুতিঃ ॥

“ He who worships any God except the Supreme Being, “ and thinks that he himself is distinct and inferior to that “ God, knows nothing, and is considered a domestic beast “ of these gods.”

“ A state even so high as that of Brahma, does not afford “ real bliss.”

আত্মৈবোপাসীত ॥

শ্রুতি : ।

“ Adore God alone.”

আত্মৈববেদং নিত্যদোপাসনং স্যাৎ নানাৎ কিঞ্চিৎ সমুপাসীত ধীরঃ ॥

শ্রুতিঃ ॥

“ None but the Supreme Being is to be worshipped ; “ nothing excepting him should be adored by a wise man.” I repeat also the following text of the Vaidanta :

ভাক্তং বা অনাত্মবিক্ৰাৎ তথাহি দর্শয়তি ॥

বেদান্তসূত্রং ॥

“ The declaration of the Vaida, that those that worship “ the celestial gods are the food of such gods, is an allegorical

“ expression, and only means that they are comforts to the
 “ celestial gods, as food to mankind ; for he who has no faith
 “ in the Supreme Being, is rendered subject to these gods ;
 “ the Vaidā affirms the same.”

No reply therefore is, I presume, required of me to the arguments adduced by the learned Brahmun in his treatise for idol-worship ; except that I should offer some additional authorities, confirming exclusively the rational worship of the true God, and prohibiting the worship of the celestial figures and their images. I beg leave accordingly to quote, in the first instance, a few texts of the Vaidā :

তমেব বিদিষ্বা অতিমৃত্যুমেতি নান্যঃ পন্থা বিদ্যতেহয়নায় ॥

ঋতিঃ ॥

“ Men may acquire eternal beatitude, by obtaining a knowledge of the Supreme Being alone ; there is no other way
 “ to salvation.”

নিত্যোহনিত্যানাং চেতনশ্চেতনানাং একোবহুনাং যোবিদধাতি কামান্ ।

তমাত্মস্থং বেহনুপশ্যন্তি ধীরাস্তেবাং শান্তিঃ শান্তী নেতরেষাং ॥

ঋতিঃ ॥

“ To those that acquire a knowledge of Him, the Ruler
 “ of the intellectual power, who is eternal amidst the perishable universe, and is the source of sensation among
 “ all animate existences, and who alone assigns to so many
 “ objects their respective purposes, everlasting beatitude
 “ is allotted ; but not to those who are not possessed of
 “ that knowledge.”

And in the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th texts of the Kainopanishad, the Vaidā has five times successively, denied the divinity of any specific being which men in general worship ; and has affirmed the divinity of that Being solely, who is beyond description and comprehension, and out of the reach of the power of vision, and of the sense of hearing or of smelling. The most celebrated Shankaracharya, in his commentary upon these texts, states that, lest people should suppose Vishnu, Mahadeba, Povana, Indra, or any other, to be a supreme spirit, the Vaidā in this passage disavows positively the divinity of all of them. Again, the Vaidā says :

অমুখ্যানাম তে লোকাঅক্লে তমসাবৃত্তাঃ ।

তাংস্তে প্রেত্যাভিগচ্ছন্তি যে কে চান্নহনোজনাঃ ॥

বাজসনেয়সংহিতোপনিষদ্ ॥

“Those that neglect the contemplation of the Supreme Spirit, either by devoting themselves solely to the performance of the ceremonies of religion, or by living destitute of religious ideas, shall, after death, assume the state of demons, such as that of the celestial gods, and of other created beings, which are surrounded with the darkness of ignorance.”

It will not, I hope, be supposed inconsistent with the subject in question to mention in this place in what manner the Vaidanta treats of these celestial gods, and how the Vaidanta classes them among the other beings. The Vaidanta (c. 1st, s. 3d, t. 26th) has the following passage :

তদুপর্যাপি বাদরায়ণঃ সম্ভবাৎ ॥

বেদান্তসূত্রং ॥

“Vyas affirms that it is prescribed also to the celestial gods and heavenly beings to attain a knowledge of the Supreme Being, because a desire of absorption is equally possible for them.”

And the Vaidanta, in the Moonduc Oopanishad, thus declares :

যঃ সৰ্বজ্ঞঃ সৰ্ববিদ্ যস্য জ্ঞানময়ং তপঃ ।

তস্মাদেতদ্বাক্তানামরূপমন্নঞ্চ জায়তে ॥

মুণ্ডকোপনিষৎ ॥

“From him, who knows all things generally and particularly, and who only by his omniscience created the universe, Bruhmá, and whatever bears appellation, and figure as well as food, all are produced.”

তস্মাক্ত দেবা বহুধাঃসংপ্রসূতাঃ সাধ্যামনুষ্যাঃ পশুবোবয়াংসি ।

মুণ্ডকোপনিষৎ ॥

“From Him (the Supreme Being) celestial gods of many descriptions, Saddha, or beings next to celestial gods, mankind, beasts, birds, all are produced.”

In the Daibee Mahatmya, a work which is as much in circulation among the Hindoos as their daily prayer-book, (c. 1st, t. 66th) the creation of Vishnu, Brahma, and Mahadeva, is most distinctly affirmed.

Munoo the best of all the commentators of the Vaidas, says (chap. 12th, text 85th) :

সর্বেষামপি চৈতেষামাভিজ্ঞানং পরংমৃতং।

তদ্ব্যগ্রংসর্ববিদ্যানাং প্রাপ্যতে হমৃতং ততঃ॥

মনুঃ ॥

“ Of all those duties, answered Bhrigoo, the principal is “ to acquire from the Oupanishad a true knowledge of the “ one Supreme Spirit, that is, the most exalted of all sciences. “ because through that knowledge eternal beatitude is ob- “ tained.”

And the same author, in the conclusion of his work on rites and ceremonies, thus directs (t. 92d, c. 12th) :

যথোক্তান্যপি কৰ্ম্মাণি পরিহায় দ্বিজোত্তমঃ।

আভিজ্ঞানে শমে চ স্যাৎ বেদান্ত্যাসে চ যত্নবান্ ॥

মনুঃ ॥

“ Thus must the chief of the twice born, though he neglect “ the ceremonial rites mentioned in the Shastras, be diligent “ in attaining a knowledge of God, in controlling his organs “ of sense, and in repeating the Vaida.”

In the Coolarnuva, “ absorption is not to be effected “ by the studies of the Vaidas nor by the reading “ of other Shastras : absorption is effected by a true know- “ ledge of the Supreme Being. O ! Parbutee, except that “ knowledge there is no other way to absorption.” Cast or “ religious order belonging to each sect, is not calculated to “ be the cause of eternal beatitude, nor is the study of Dur- “ shunas or any other Shastras, sufficient to produce absorp- “ tion : a knowledge of the Supreme Spirit is alone the “ cause of eternal beatitude.” Mahanervana : “ He who “ believes that from the highest state of Brahmá to the lowest “ state of a straw, all are delusions, and that the one Supreme “ Spirit is the only true being, attains beatitude.” “ Those “ who believe that the divine nature exists in an image “ made of earth, stone, metal, wood, or of other materials, “ reap only distress by their austerities ; but they cannot, “ without a knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, acquire ab- “ sorption.”

I am really sorry to observe that, notwithstanding these

authorities and a thousand others of a similar nature, the learned Brahmun appears altogether unimpressed by the luminous manner in which they inculcate the sublime simple spiritual belief in and worship of, one God, and that, on the contrary, he should manifest so much zeal in leading people into an idolatrous belief in the divinity of created and perishable beings.

Idolatry, as now practised by our countrymen, and which the learned Brahmun so zealously supports as conducive to morality, is not only rejected by the Shastras universally, but must also be looked upon with great horror by common sense, as leading directly to immorality and destructive of social comforts. For every Hindoo who devotes himself to this absurd worship, constructs for that purpose a couple of male and female idols, sometimes indecent in form, as representatives of his favorite deities ; he is taught and enjoined from his infancy to contemplate and repeat the history of these, as well as their fellow deities, though the actions ascribed to them be only a continued series of debauchery, sensuality, falsehood, ingratitude, breach of trust, and treachery to friends. There can be but one opinion respecting the moral conduct to be expected of a person, who has been brought up with sentiments of reverence to such beings, who refreshes his memory relative to them almost every day, and who has been persuaded to believe, that a repetition of the holy name of one of these deities, or a trifling present to his image or to his devotee, is sufficient, not only to purify and free him from all crimes whatsoever, but to procure to him future beatitude.

As to the custom or practice to which the learned Brahmun so often refers in defence of idolatry, I have already, I presume, explained in the Preface of the Ishopanishad, the accidental circumstances which have caused idol-worship to flourish throughout the greater part of India ; but, as the learned Brahmun has not condescended to notice any of my remarks on this subject, I beg leave to repeat here a part of them.

“ Many learned Brahmuns are perfectly aware of the “ absurdity of idolatry, and are well informed of the nature “ of the pure mode of divine worship ; but as in the rites, “ ceremonies, and festivals of idolatry they find the source

“ of their comforts and fortune, they not only never fail to protect idol-worship from all attacks, but even advance and encourage it to the utmost of their power, by keeping the knowledge of their scriptures concealed from the rest of the people.” And again : “ It is, however, evident to every one possessed of common sense, that custom or fashion is quite different from divine faith ; the latter proceeding from spiritual authorities and correct reasoning, and the former being merely the fruit of vulgar caprice. What can justify a man, who believes in the inspiration of his religious books, in neglecting the direct authorities of the same works, and subjecting himself entirely to custom and fashion, which are liable to perpetual changes, and depend upon popular whim ? But it cannot be passed unnoticed, that those who practise idolatry, and defend it under the shield of custom, have been violating their customs almost every twenty years, for the sake of a little convenience, or to promote their worldly advantages.” Instances of this sort are mentioned in the preface of the Ishopanishad, and to those I beg leave to recal the attention of the learned Brahmun.

Every reader may observe, that the learned Brahmun in his treatise, written (as he says) on the doctrines of the Vaidanta, has generally neglected to quote any authority for his assertions ; and when he cites the Vaida or the Vaidanta (which he does sometimes) as his authority, he carefully omits to mention the text or part to which his assertion refers. The validity of theological controversy chiefly depends upon Scriptural authority, but when no authority is offered, the public may judge how far its credibility should extend. I shall, however, make a few remarks on the absurd and contradictory assertions with which the treatise abounds.

The learned Brahmun observes ; “ But if the divine essence itself, and not the energy be extolled, it will be adored under the forms of Brahmá, Vishnu, and Indra, and other male deities.” And in other places, (p. 30, l. 27) : “ So by paying adoration to any material object, animate or inanimate, the Supreme Being himself is adored.” If the truth of the latter assertion be admitted (namely, that God himself is adored by the adoration of any thing whatsoever),

no mark of distinction between the adoration of any visible objects and male deities will exist ; and the former assertion respecting the adoration of the Supreme Being through the male deities only, will appear an absurd restriction.

The learned Brahmun states (p. 19, l. 31), that, " If you " believe on the authority of the Scriptures, that there is a " Supreme Being can you not believe that he is united to matter ? " A belief in God is by no means connected with a belief of his being united to matter : for those that have faith in the existence of the Almighty, and are endued with common sense, scruple not to confess their ignorance as to his nature or mode of existence, in regard to the point of his relation to matter, or to the properties of matter. How, therefore, can a belief in God's being united to matter, be inferred as a necessary consequence of a belief in his existence ? The learned Brahmun again contradicts himself on this point, saying (p. 38, l. 19) : " The divine essence being supernatural and immaterial, a knowledge of it is to be acquired " solely from revelations."

The learned Brahmun (in p. 18, l. 4) : states that, " A " quality cannot exist independently of its substance, but " substance may exist independently of any quality." Every one possessed of sensation is convinced, that a substance is as much dependent on the possession of some quality or qualities for its existence, as a quality on some substance. It is impossible even to imagine a substance divested of qualities. Despoil it as much as you please, that of magnitude must still remain. I therefore trust that the public will not suppose the above stated doctrines of the learned Brahmun to have been derived from those of the Vaidanta.

It is again stated (p. 21, l. 4) that, " In point of fact, if " you admit the existence of matter, as far as it regards " yourself, with its twenty-four accidents, as confirmed by " universal experience, you can easily conceive that the same " properties belong to the Supreme Being." It is easy enough for the learned Brahmun to conceive that the twenty-four properties which are peculiar to animals, and among which all sources of carnal pleasures are included, belong to his supposed deities ; but it is difficult, or rather impossible, for a man untainted with idolatrous principles, to ascribe to

God all such properties as he allows to exist in himself.

The learned Brahmun has drawn an analogy between the operation of the charms of the Vaidas, and that of magic; whereon he says (p. 18, l. 1) : " Can not the charms of the Vaidas operate as powerfully as those of magic, in producing effects where the cause is not present ?" If the foundation of the Vaidas is held not to be stronger, as the learned Brahmun seems to consider it, than that of magic, I am afraid it will be found to rest on so slender a footing, that its doctrines will hardly be worth discussion.

In p. 24, l. 10, the learned Brahmun states that " The Vaidanta itself, in treating of the several deities, declares them to be possessed of forms, and their actions and enjoyments are all dependent on their corporeal nature." But (p. 21, l. 19) he says : " Because the male and female deities, whose being I contend for, are nothing more than accidents existing in the Supreme Being."

He thus at one time considers these deities as possessed of a corporeal nature, and at another declares them to be mere accidents in God ; which are quite inconsistent with the attribute of corporeality. I am really at a loss to understand, how the learned Brahmun could admit so dark a contradiction into his " Lunar light of the Vaidanta."

The learned Brahmun (in p. 27, l. 6) thus assimilates the worship of the Supreme Being to that of an earthly king, saying " Let us drop the discourse concerning a Supreme and Invisible Being ; take an earthly king. It is evident that, to serve him, there must be the medium of materiality. Can service to him be accomplished otherwise than by attendance on his person, praising his qualities, or some similar method ?" Those who believe God to be an almighty, omniscient, and independent existence, which, pervading the universe, is deficient in nothing ; and also know the feeble and dependent nature of earthly kings, as liable to sudden ruin, as harassed by incessant cares and wants, ought never, I presume, to assimilate the contemplation of the Almighty power with any corporeal service acceptable to an earthly king. But as by means of this analogy, the learned Brahmun and his brethren have successfully persuaded their followers to make, in imitation of

presents and bribes offered to princes, pecuniary vows to these supposed deities, to which it would seem none but the learned Brahmun and his brethren have exclusive claim,—and as such analogy has thus become the source of their comforts and livelihood, I shall say no more upon so tender a subject.

He further observes (in p. 22, l. 27) : “ In reverting to “ the subject, you affirm, that you admit the existence of “ matter in human beings, because it is evident to your senses ; “ but deny it with respect to God, because it is not evident to “ your senses,” &c. ; and, “ If this be your method of reasoning, it would appear that your faith is confined to those “ objects only which are evident to your senses.” As far as my recollection goes with respect to the contents of my publications, both in the native language and in English, I believe I never denied the materiality of God, on the mere ground of its not being evident to our senses. The assertion which I quoted, or made use of in my former treatises, is, that the nature of the Godhead is beyond the comprehension of external and internal senses ; which, I presume, implies neither denial of the materiality of God, on the sole ground of his being invisible, nor the limitation of my faith merely to objects evident to the senses. For many things that far surpass the limits of our senses to perceive, or experience to teach, may yet be rendered credible, or even demonstrated by inferences drawn from our experience. Such as the mutual gravitation of the earth and moon towards each other, and of both to the sun ; which facts cannot be perceived by any of our senses, but may be clearly demonstrated by reasoning drawn from our experience. Hence it appears, that a thing is justly denied, only, when found contrary to sense and reason, and not merely because it is not perceptible to the senses.

I have now to notice the friendly advice given me by the learned Brahmun (in p. 23, l 16). “ But at all the events “ divest yourself of the uneasy sensations you profess to experience, at witnessing the worship paid to idols, prepared “ at the expense and labour of another.” In thanking him for his trouble in offering me this counsel, I must, however, beg the learned Brahmun to excuse me, while I acknowledge myself unable to follow it ; and that for several reasons. 1st.

A feeling for the misery and distress of his fellow creatures is, to every one not overpowered by selfish motives, I presume, rather natural than optional. 2dly. I, as one of their countrymen, and ranked in the most religious sect, of course participate in the disgrace and ridicule to which they have subjected themselves, in defiance of their scriptural authority, by the worship of idols, very often under the most shameful forms, accompanied with the foulest language, and most indecent hymns and gestures. 3dly. A sense of the duty which one man owes to another, compels me to exert my utmost endeavours to rescue them from imposition and servitude, and promote their comfort and happiness.

He farther observes (p. 30, l. 19) : " In the like manner, " the King of Kings is served equally by those worshippers " who are acquainted with his real essence, and by those who " only recognize Him under the forms of the deities ; but " in the future distribution of rewards a distinction will be " made." As the learned Brahmun confesses, that the same reward is not promised to the worshippers of figured deities as to the adorers of the Supreme Being, it seems strange that he should persist in alleging that God is truly worshipped in the adoration of figured gods ; for if the worship be in both cases the same, the reward bestowed by a just God must be the same to both ; but the rewards are not the same to both, and therefore the worship of figured deities cannot be considered equal to the adoration of God.

In the same page (l. 7), he compares God to a mighty emperor ; saying, " As a mighty emperor travels through " his kingdom in the garb of a peasant, to effect the welfare " of his subjects, so the King of Kings pervades the universe, " assuming a divine, or even a human form, for the same " benevolent purpose." This comparison seems extremely objectionable, and the inference from it totally inadmissible. For a king being ignorant of things out of the reach of his sight, and liable to be deceived respecting the secrets and private opinions of his subjects, may sometimes be obliged to travel through his kingdom, to acquire a knowledge of their condition, and to promote their welfare personally. But there can be obviously no inducement for an omnipotent being, in whose omniscience also the learned Brahmun

dare say, believes, to assume a form in order either to acquaint himself with the affairs of men, or to accomplish any benevolent design towards his creatures.

He again observes, that these figures and idols are representations of the true God, a sight of which serves, as he alleges, to bring that Being to his recollection (p. 30, l. 5): "They are as pictures, which recal to the memory a dear and absent friend, or like the worship of the moon, reflected in various waters."

This observation of the learned Brahmun, induces me to suppose that he must have formed a notion of Godhead quite strange and contemptible: for it is almost impossible for a man, who has a becoming idea of God's superiority to all creatures, to represent Him, as the Hindoos very often do, in a form so shameful, that a description of it is prohibited by common decency, or in a shape so ridiculous, as that piebald kite called Kshyemunkuree, and that of another bird called Neelkunth, or of jakals, &c. And it is equally difficult to believe that a rational being can make use of such objects to bring the All-perfect Almighty Power to his recollection.

He further says (p. 31, l. 32): "If any one assert that the case is otherwise, that the deities, mankind, the heavens, and other objects, have an existence independent of God, that faith in him is sufficient without worship, that they (the deities) cannot meet with reverence, how can that person affect to disbelieve the doctrine of independent existence, or assert that he is a believer in universality, or a follower of the Vaidanta?" To acquit myself from such gross but unfounded accusation as that of my believing material existence to be independent of God, I repeat a few passages from the abridgment of the Vaidanta. (p. 6, l. 8): "Nothing bears true existence excepting God." Again in l. 9, "The existence of whatever thing that appears to us relies on the existence of God." Besides, there is not, I am confident, a single assertion in the whole of my publications, from which the learned Brahmun might justly infer that I believed in the independent existence of deities, mankind, the heavens, or other objects. The public, by an examination of these works, will be enabled to judge how far the learned Brahmun has ventured to brave public opinion, in

the invention of arguments for the defence of idolatry.

He again says (p. 34, l. 28) : " If, by the practice of the prescribed forms in a church, a temple, or a mosque, God be worshipped, how can he be dishonoured by being worshipped under the form of an image, however manufactured ?" Those who contemplate God in a church or mosque, or elevate their minds to a notion of the Almighty Power in any other appropriated place, for the sake of good example, never pay divine homage to these places ; but those that pretend to worship God under the form of an image, consider it to be possessed of divine nature, and at the same time, most inconsistently, as imbued with immoral principles. Moreover, the promoters of the worship of images, by promulgating anecdotes illustrative of the supposed divine power of particular idols, endeavours to excite the reverence of the people, and specially of pilgrims ; who, under these superstitious ideas, are persuaded to propitiate them with large sacrifices of money, and sometimes even by that of their own lives. Having so far entered into this subject, the learned Brahmun will, I hope, be convinced of the impropriety of the analogy which he has drawn between a worship within a certain material object and a worship of a material object.

As to his question (p. 34, l. 32), " Is the sight of the image displeasing ?" My answer must be affirmative. It is extremely natural that, to a mind whose purity is not corrupted by a degrading superstition, the sight of images which are often of the most hideous or indecent description, and which must therefore excite disgust in the minds of the spectator, should be displeasing. A visit to Calighaut, or Barahnagur, which are only distant four miles from Calcutta, will sufficiently convince the reader of the unpleasant nature of their beloved images. He again asks in the same page, (l. 33) : " Will a beloved friend be treated with disrespect by being seated on a chair, when he arrives in your house, or by being presented with fragrant flowers and other offerings ?" To which I shall say no ; but at the same time I must assert that a friend worthy of reverence would not, we may be sure, be at all pleased at being exhibited sometimes in a form, the bare mention of which would be considered as a gross insult to the decorous feelings of the public ; and

sometimes in the shape of a monkey, fish, hog, or elephant, or at being represented as destitute of every virtue, and altogether abandoned. Nor would he believe his host to be possessed of common sense, who, as a token of regard, would altogether neglect his guest, to go and lay fruits and flowers before his picture.

It is said (p. 39, l. 23) : " In the accounts of ancient Greece we meet with the worship of idols, and the practice of austerities, but these acts have been contemned by the more enlightened moderns." I am really glad to observe that the learned Brahmun, more liberally and plainly than could be expected, confesses that idolatry will be totally contemned as soon as the understanding is improved. I, however, beg leave to remark on this instance, that though the idolatry practised by the Greeks and Romans was certainly just as impure, absurd, and puerile as that of the present Hindoos, yet the former was by no means so destructive of the comforts of life, or injurious to the texture of society, as the latter. The present Hindoo idolatry being made to consist in following certain modes and restraints of diet (which according to the authorities of the Mahabharat and other histories were never observed by their forefathers), has subjected its unfortunate votaries to entire separation from the rest of the world, and also from each other, and to constant inconveniences and distress.

A Hindoo, for instance, who affects particular purity, cannot even partake of food dressed by his own brother, when invited to his house ; and if touched by him while eating, he must throw away the remaining part of his meal. In fact, owing to the observance of such peculiar idolatry, directly contrary to the authorities of their scripture, they hardly deserve the name of social beings.

The learned Brahmun further says (p. 23, l. 3) : " If you affirm that you are not an infidel, but that your arguments are in conformity with those of the philosophers who were ignorant of the Vaidas," &c. A remark of this kind cannot, I am sure, be considered as at all applicable to a person who has subjected himself to this writer's remarks only by translating and publishing the principal parts of the Vaidas, and by vindicating the Vaidanta theology ; and who never

advanced on religious controversy any argument which was not founded upon the authorities of the Vaidas and their celebrated commentators. It is, however, remarkable that, although the learned Brahmun and his brethren frequently quote the name of the Vaidas, and other Shastras, both in writing and in verbal discussion, they pay little or no attention in practice to their precepts, even in the points of the most important nature, a few of which I beg leave to notice here. 1st, The adoration of the invisible Supreme Being, although exclusively prescribed by the Oopanishads, or the principal parts of the Vaidas, and also by the Vaidanta Durshun, has been totally neglected, and even discountenanced, by the learned Brahmun and his followers ; the idol-worship, which those authorities permit only to the ignorant, having been substituted for that pure worship. 2dly, Ungeera and Vishnu, and also the modern Rughonundun, authorize a widow to burn herself voluntarily along with the corpse of her husband : but modern Brahmuns, in direct opposition to their authority, allow her relations to bind the mournful and infatuated widow to the funeral pile with ropes and bamboos, as soon as she has expressed a wish to perform the dreadful funeral sacrifice, to which the Brahmuns lend a ready assistance. 3dly, Although an acceptance of money or of a present in the marriage contract of a daughter is most strictly prohibited by the Vaidas and by Munoo (text 98 and 100 of chap. 9). yet the sale of female children under pretence of marriage is practised by nearly two-thirds of the Brahmuns of Bengal and Tirhoot, as well as by their followers generally.

4thly. Yagnyubulkya has authorized the second marriage of a man, while his former wife is living ; but only under certain circumstances of misconduct or misfortune in the latter such as the vice of drinking wine, of deception, of extravagance, of using disagreeable language, or shewing manifest dislike towards her husband ; long protracted and incurable illness, barrenness, or producing only female offspring. In defiance, however, of this restraint, some of them marry thirty or forty women, either for the sake of money got with them at marriage, or to gratify brutal inclinations. Madhosingh, the late Rajah of Tirhoot, through compassion towards that helpless sex, limited, I am told,

within these thirty or forty years, the Brahmuns of that district to four wives only. This regulation, although falling short both of the written law and of that of reason, tends to alleviate in some measure the misery to which women were before exposed, as well as to diminish in some degree domestic strife and disturbance.

5thly. According to the authority of Munoo (text 155, chap. 2d), respect and distinction are due to a Brahmun, merely in proportion to his knowledge ; but on the contrary amongst modern Hindoos, honour is paid exclusively to certain families of Brahmuns, such as the Koolins, &c., however void of knowledge and principle they may be. This departure from law and justice was made by the authority of a native prince of Bengal, named Bullalsen, within the last three or four hundred years. And this innovation may perhaps be considered as the chief source of that decay of learning and virtue, which, I am sorry to say, may be at present observed. For wherever respectability is confined to birth only, acquisition of knowledge, and the practice of morality, in that country, must rapidly decline.

The learned Brahmun objects to the term indescribable, although universally assigned to the Supreme Being by the Vaida, and by the Vaidanta theology, saying (p. 37, l. 20), " It is a wonderful interpretation of the Vaidanta to say that " God is indescribable, although existing, unless indeed he " be looked upon as the production of magic ; as existing in " one sense, and non-existent in another." And again (l. 14), " he, therefore, who asserts that the Supreme Being is " indescribable and at the same time existing, must conceive " that He, like the world, is mutable," &c., In answer to which I beg to refer the learned Brahmun to the 11th text of the 3d Brahmun of the 4th chapter of the Brehdarunyuc, the principal part of the Yujoor Vaida, as commented upon by the celebrated Shunkaracharya :

অথাৎ আদেশোনেতি নেতি নহেতুস্বাদিতিনিত্যন্যং পরমস্বার্থ
নামধেয়ং সত্যস্য সত্যমিতি প্রাণং বৈ সত্যং তেষামেষমসত্যং ॥

বৃহদারণ্যকশ্রুতিঃ ॥

" The Vaida having so far described God, by various " absolute and relative epithets, was convinced of its incapa-

" bility of giving a real description of the nature of the God-
 " head : language can convey a notion of things only either
 " by the appellations by which they are already known, or by
 " describing their figure, accidents, genus, and properties ;
 " but God has none of these physical circumstances : the
 " Vaidatherefore attempted to explain him in negative terms."
 " (that is, by declaring that whatever thing may be perceived
 " by the mental faculties, or the external senses, is not God.)"
 " The Vaida ascribing to God attributes of eternity,
 " wisdom, truth, &c., shews that it can explain him only by
 " ascribing those attributes, and applying those epithets, that
 " are held by man in the highest estimation, without in-
 " tending to assert the adequacy of such description. He is
 " the only true existence amidst all dependent existences,
 " and the true source of our senses." Also in the text 3d of
 the Cainopanishad :

ন তত্র চক্ষুর্গচ্ছতি ন বাগ্নাচ্ছতি নোমনোন বিদ্বান বিজানীমো
 যথৈতদনুশিষ্যাদন্যদেব তদ্বিতাদিতো অবিদিতাদপি। ইতি শুক্ৰম
 পূর্বেষাং যে নস্তদ্ব্যাচচক্ষিরে ॥

" Hence no vision can approach him ; no language can
 " describe him ; no intellectual power can compass or deter-
 " mine him. We know nothing of how the Supreme Being
 " should be explained : He is beyond nature, which is above
 " comprehension : our ancient spiritual parents have thus
 " explained Him to us."

It cannot, however, be inferred, from our acknowledg-
 ed ignorance of the nature and attributes of the Supreme
 Being, that we are equally ignorant as to His existence.
 The wonderful structure and growth of even so trifling an
 object as a leaf of a tree, affords proof of an Almighty Super-
 intendent of the universe ; and even the physical world
 affords numerous instances of things whose existence is quite
 evident to our senses, but of whose nature we can form no
 conception ; such as the causes of the sensations of heat and
 vision.

The learned Brahmun attempts to prove the impossibility
 of an adoration of the Deity, saying (p. 33, l. 15) : " That
 " which cannot be conceived, cannot be worshipped." Should
 the learned Brahmun consider a full conception of the nature,

essence, or qualities of the Supreme Being, or a physical picture truly representing the Almighty power, with offerings of flowers, leaves, and viands, as essential to adoration, I agree with the learned Brahmun with respect to the impossibility of the worship of God. But, should adoration imply only the elevation of the mind to the conviction of the existence of the Omnipresent Deity, as testified by His wise and wonderful works, and continual contemplation of His power as so displayed ; together with a constant sense of the gratitude which we naturally owe Him, for our existence, sensation, and comfort.—I never will hesitate to assert, that His adoration is not only possible, and practicable but even incumbent upon every rational creature. For further explanation, I refer the learned Brahmun to the text 47, sect. 4, chap. 3, of the Vaidanta Durshuna.

To his question, “ what are you yourselves ? ” I suppose I may safely reply for myself, that I am a poor dependent creature ;—subject, in common with others, to momentary changes and liable to sudden destruction.

At p. 45, l. 30, the learned Brahmun, if I rightly understand his object, means to insinuate, that I have adopted the doctrines of those who deny the responsibility of man as a moral agent. I am quite at a loss to conceive from what part of my writings this inference has been drawn, as I have not only never entertained such opinions myself, but have taken pains to explain the passage in the Vaida on which this false doctrine is founded. In the Preface to the Ishopanishad, I have said that, “ the Vaidanta by “ declaring that God is every where and every thing is in “ God, means that nothing is absent from God, and that no- “ thing bears real existence except by the volition of God.” And again, in the same page I quoted the example of the most revered teachers of the Vaidanta doctrine, who, “ although they declared their faith in the Omnipresent God, “ according to the doctrines of the Vaidanta, assigned to every “ creature the particular character and respect he was entitled to.”

I omitted to notice the strange mode of argument which the learned Brahmun (at p. 29) has adopted in defence of idolatry. After acknowledging that the least deficiency

in judgment renders man incapable of looking up to an Omnipresent Supreme Being, whereby he mistakes a created object for the great Creator, he insinuates that an erroneous notion in this respect is as likely to lead to eternal happiness, as a knowledge of truth. At 1. 5, he says : " And although " a person through deficiency in judgment, should be unable to discover the real nature of a thing, does it follow, " that his error will prevent the natural effect from appearing ? " When a man in a dream sees a tiger, is he not in as much " alarm as if he saw it in reality ? "

This mode of claiming for idol-worship a value equal to that of pure religion, which it can never be admitted to possess, may have succeeded in retaining some of his followers in the delusive dream, from which he is so anxious that they should not be awoke. But some of them have, I know, begun to inquire into the truth of those notions in which they have been instructed ; and these are not likely to mistake for true, the false analogy that is in the above passage attempted to be drawn ; nor will they believe that, however powerful may be the influence of imagination, even under false impressions, future happiness, which depends on God alone, can ever be ranked amongst its effects. Such enquirers will, I hope, at last become sensible that the system of dreaming recommended by the learned Brahmun, however essential to the interests of himself and of his cast, can bring to them no advantage, either substantial or eternal.

As instances of the erroneous confidence which is placed in the repetition of the name of a god to effect purification from sins, noticed by me I may quote the following passages.

He who pronounces " Doorga " (the name of the goddess), though he constantly practise adultery, plunder others of their property, or commit the most heinous crimes, is freed from all sins.

A person pronouncing loudly, " reverence to Huri," even involuntarily, in the state of falling down, of slipping, of labouring under illness, or of sneezing, purifies himself from the foulest crimes.

He who contemplates the Ganges, while walking, sitting, sleeping, thinking of other things, awake, eating,

breathing, and conversing, is delivered from sins.

The circumstances alluded to in this treatise, relative to the wicked conduct of their supposed deities, are perfectly familiar to every individual Hindoo. But those Europeans who are not acquainted with the particulars related of them, may perhaps feel a wish to be in possession of them. I therefore, with a view to gratify their curiosity and to vindicate my assertion, beg to be allowed to mention a few instances in point, with the authorities on which they rest. As I have already noticed the debauchery of Krishna, and his gross sensuality, and that of his fellow deities, such as Shiva and Bruhma, in my reply to the observations of Shunkarashastri, instead of repeating them here, I refer my readers to that reply, and also to the tenth division of the Bhaguvata, to the Hurybungsa or last division of the Mahabharatas, and to the Neguma, as well as to the several Agumas, which give a detailed account of their lewdness and debauchery. As to falsehood, their favourite deity Krishna is more conspicuous than the rest. Jurra-Sindhu, a powerful prince of Behar, having heard of the melancholy murder of his son-in-law perpetrated by Krishna, harassed, and at last drove him out of the place of his nativity (Muthoora) by frequent military expeditions. Krishna in revenge, resolved to deprive that prince of his life by fraud, and in a most unjustifiable manner. To accomplish his object, he and his two cousins, Bheema and Urjoona, declared themselves to be Brahmuns, and in that disguise entered his palace ; where finding him weakened by a religious fast, and surrounded only by his family and priests, they challenged him to fight a duel. He accordingly fought Bheema, the strongest of the three ; who conquered and put him to death. —Vide Subha Purba or second Book of the Maha-Bharuta. Krishna again persuaded Joodhisthir, his cousin, to give false evidence in order to accomplish the murder of Drowna their spiritual father.—Vide Drowna Purba, or seventh Book of the Maha-Bharuth.

Vishnu and others combined in a conspiracy against Buli, a mighty emperor ; but finding his power irresistible, that deity was determined to ruin him by stratagem, and for that purpose appeared to him in the shape of a dwarf, begging alms.

Notwithstanding Buli was warned of the intention of Vishnu, yet, impressed with a high sense of generosity, he could not refuse a boon to a beggar ; that grateful deity in return not only deprived him of his whole empire, which he put himself in possession of by virtue of the boon of Buli, but also inflicted on him the disgrace of bondage and confinement in Patal.—Vide latter part of the Hurri Bungas, or last book of the Maha-Bharuta.

When the battle of Coorookshetru was decided by the fatal destruction of Doorjodhun, the remaining part of the army of his rival Yoodhisthir, returned to the camp to rest during the night, under the personal care and protection of Mahadaiva. That deity having, however, been cajoled by the flattery offered him by Uswathama, one of the friends of the unfortunate Doorjodhun, not only allowed him to destroy the whole army that was asleep under the confidence of his protection, but even assisted him with his sword to accomplish his bloody purpose—Vide Sousuptik-Purba, or eleventh book of the Maha-Bharuta.

When the Ussoors, at the churning of the ocean, gave the pitcher of the water of immortality in charge to Vishnu, he betrayed his trust by delivering it to their step-brothers and enemies, the celestial gods—Vide first book, or ádi Purba of the Maha-Bharuta.

Instances like these might be multiplied beyond number : and crimes of a much deeper dye might easily be added to the list, were I not unwilling to stain these pages by making them the vehicle of such stories of immorality and vice. May God speedily purify the minds of my countrymen from the corruptness which such tales are too apt to produce ; and lead their hearts to that pure morality, which is inseparable from the true worship of Him !

AN APOLOGY

FOR THE

Pursuit of Final Beatitude,

INDEPENDENTLY OF

BRAHMUNICAL OBSERVANCES,

BY

RAJAH RAMMOHUN ROY.

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SOOBRAHMUNYU SHASTREE, a diligent observer of Brahmunical tenets, wishing to prove that those Brahmuns who do not study the Vaidas with their subordinate sciences, are degraded from the rank of Brahmuns, prepared and offered an Essay on that subject to the Brahmuns of the province of Bengal, who are generally deficient in those studies. In this, he has advanced three assertions : which, however, have no tendency to establish his position. He alleges 1st, that, to " a person not acquainted with the Vaidas, neither temporary " heavenly enjoyments, nor eternal beatitude, can be allotted." 2dly, that, " he only who has studied the Vaidas is authorized " to seek the knowledge of God," and 3dly, that " men must " perform without omission all the rites and duties prescribed " in the Vaidas and Smritis before acquiring a thorough " knowledge of God." On these positions he attempts to establish, that the performance of the duties and rites prescribed by the Shastrus for each class according to their religious order, such as the studies of the Vaidas and the offering of sacrifices, &c., is absolutely necessary towards the acquisition of a knowledge of God. We consequently take upon ourselves to offer in our own defence the following remarks, in answer to those assertions.

We admit that it is proper in men to observe the duties and rites prescribed by the Shastru for each class according to their religious order, in acquiring knowledge respecting God, such observance being conducive to that acquisition ; an admission which is not inconsistent with the authorities of the Vaidas and other Shastrus. But we can by no means admit the necessity of observing those duties and rites as indispensable steps towards attaining divine knowledge,

which the learned Shastree pronounces them to be ; for the great Vyas, in his work of the Vaidanta Durshuna, or the explanation of the spiritual parts of the Vaidas, justifies the attainment of the knowledge of God, even by those who never practise the prescribed duties and rites, as appears from the following two passages of Vyas in the same Durshuna.

“অন্তরা চাপি তু তদূচ্যেঃ ।”

“অপি চ স্বর্গ্যাতে ।”

The celebrated ShunkurAcharyu thus comments upon those two texts : “As to the question, whether such men as havenot
“the sacred fire, or are afflicted with poverty, who profess
“no religious order whatsoever, and who do not belong to
“any cast, are authorized to seek divine knowledge or not ?
“On a superficial view, it appears, that they are not permitted
“to make such attainments, as the duties prescribed for
“each class are declared to lead to divine knowledge, and to
“those duties they are altogether strangers. Such doubt
“having arisen, the great Vyas thus decides : even a person
“who professes no religious order, is permitted to acquire
“knowledge of God ; for it is found in the Vaidas that
“Ruckyu, Bachuknuvee, and others who, like them, did not
“belong to any class, obtained divine knowledge. It is
“also mentioned in the sacred tradition, that Sumvurtu and
“others, living naked and totally independent of the world,
“who practised no prescribed duties, assumed the rank of
“the highest devotees.” Besides the texts of the Vaida, such as

“তয়োহঁ মৈত্রেয়ী ব্রহ্মবাदिनी বভূব ।”

“আত্মা বা অরে দুষ্কৰাঃ ।”

show that Muetreyee and others, who, being women, had not the option of studying the Vaida, were, notwithstanding, qualified to acquire divine knowledge ; and in the Smriti as well as in the Commentary of the celebrated ShunkurAcharyu, Soolubha and other women are styled knowers of the Supreme Being. Also Bidoor, Dhurmubyadhu, and others of the fourth class, attained the knowledge of God without having an opportunity of studying the Vaidas. All this we find in the sacred traditions : hence those who have a thorough knowledge of the Vaidas and

Smriti, can pay no deference to the opinion maintained by the learned Shastree, that those only who have studied the Vaidas are qualified to acquire the knowledge of God. Moreover, to remove all doubt as to Shoodrus and others being capable of attaining Divine knowledge without the assistance of the Vaidas, the celebrated Commentator, in illustrating the text "Sruvanadhyun," &c., asserts, that "the authority of the Smriti stating that "to all the four classes preaching should be offered," &c. shews that to the sacred traditions and to the Pooranas, and also to the Agumas, all the four classes have equally access ;" thus establishing that the sacred traditions, Pooranas, and Agumas without distinction can impart divine knowledge to mankind at large. From the decided opinion of Vyas, and from the precedents given by the Vaidas and sacred traditions, and also from the conclusive verdict of the most revered Commentator, those who entertain respect for those authorities, will not admit the studies of the Vaidas and other duties required of each class to be the only means of acquiring knowledge of God. Hence the sacred tradition, stating that a person, by studying the Geeta alone, had acquired final beatitude, stands unshaken and also the positive declaration of the great Muhadaiva with regard to the authentic and well-accepted Aguma Shastrus, as being the means of imparting divine knowledge to those who study them, will not be treated as inconsequential. If the spiritual parts of the Vaidas can enable men to acquire salvation by teaching them the true and eternal existence of God, and the false and perishable being of the universe, and inducing them to hear and constantly reflect on those doctrines, it is consistent with reason to admit, that the Smriti, and Aguma, and other works, inculcating the same doctrines, afford means of attaining final beatitude. What should we say more ?

cannot say, the opinion maintained by
 the learned scholars, that those only who have studied the
 Vedas are qualified to acquire the knowledge of God. More-
 over, to remove all doubt as to the truth and other being
 capable of attaining Divine knowledge without the assistance
 of the Vedas, the celebrated Commentator, in illustration
 of the text "Nirvachanam," &c., asserts that "the authority
 of the Smritis stands not" - to all the four classes preaching
 "though he offered, he shows that to the sacred traditions
 and to the Vedas and also to the Vedas, all the four
 classes have equally access;" thus establishing that the
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 studies of the Vedas and other duties required of each
 class to be the only means of acquiring knowledge of God.
 It is the sacred tradition, stating that a person, by studying
 the Vedas alone, had acquired final benefits, stands un-
 shaken, and also the positive declaration of the great Ma-
 hatma with regard to the authentic and well-accepted
 Vedas, as being the means of imparting divine know-
 ledge to those who study them, will not be treated as incon-
 sistent. If the spiritual parts of the Vedas can enable
 man to participate by teaching them the true and eternal
 existence of God, and the false and perishable being of the
 universe, and inducing them to renounce and constantly reflect on
 these doctrines, it is consistent with reason to admit that
 the Smritis and Vedas and other works, including the
 same doctrines, afford means of attaining final benefits.
 What should we say more?

